AYURVEDA NATURE'S MEDICINE

Dr. David Frawley
Dr. Subhash Ranade

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Foreword



I have had the good fortune to share the company of and work along side two of Ayurveda's most respected scholars and prolific authors, Dr. David Frawley and Dr. Subhash Ranade.

Dr. David Frawley stands in league with India's most respected historians, yogis and vaidyas. His insights into the knowledge of India's culture, her deep spirituality, and the sacred threads that have woven together thousands of years of mystical tapestry is unparalleled. He has inspired a generation of Westerners to look toward the essence of India's ancient wisdom in the hopes of bringing healing to our own society and our own health care system. A member of the California College of Ayurveda's Board of Advisors, he has been integral in shaping the curriculum of our program and the future of Ayurveda in the West.

Dr. Subhash Ranade is one of India's most prolific ambassadors of Ayurvedic knowledge. His years of clinical practice, time spent teaching, and his many writings have educated physicians and practitioners around the world. I have been moved by his unselfish sharing of India's sacred healing science. Dr. Ranade has worked closely with the California College of Ayurveda to make the knowledge of Ayurveda, long shrouded in mystery, available to Western practitioners.

Here in the West, as the profession of Ayurveda is rapidly growing and formal Ayurvedic education is being made available, there is a need for books that bring to the public a clear and concise understanding of India's indigenous healing system. *Ayurveda, Nature's Medicine* will please both the beginner who is discovering Ayurveda for the first time, and the serious student who desires a clear interpretation of India's ancient knowledge.

Ayurveda has an important role to play in the West. At this time in our history, many people are asking questions about the future direction of our healthcare system. There is less trust and greater dissatisfaction with the existent healthcare system than at any other time in our short history. Paralleling the questioning of "modern medicine" is a burgeoning interest in alternatives that, through natural methods, support the body to reestablish a state of health and well being.

Ayurveda is unique among the many options consumers have today. Its body-mind-spirit approach is not only entirely holistic in its application, but also emphasizes personal empowerment. The great Ayurvedic sage Charaka said, "What the patient knows is more important than what the practitioner knows. The successful Ayurvedic practitioner is not the one who heals the most patients, but the one who teaches his patients to heal themselves."

As a system of self-healing, Ayurveda is unparalleled. Its concepts are profound within their simplicity. Its application, based on common sense, is easy to adapt. Once a person understands even the fundamentals of this great system, their view of the world is changed forever and, with this new perception, reality shifts and healing becomes possible.

Perceiving that the reality we live in is not static but is in fact freely dynamic, capable of change at any time, Ayurveda and its sister science of Yoga explore the nature of that reality and the physical and spiritual principles which shape it. Mastering these principles, a person begins to realize that they are responsible for molding their own reality. Health or disease becomes a conscious choice. On a gross level, it is the direct result of our actions. Most people take action based upon a lack of knowledge of the physical and spiritual laws that govern well-being. Ayurveda teaches us these laws and the actions that go with them so we can establish health within the body, and harmony within the mind, and thus pursue our deeper spiritual goals.

Each one of us has a great potential to live up to. Through our genes and our consciousness, karma sets the stage. What

we do once we arrive is up to us. Whether we reach our potential or sabotage ourselves along our journey depends upon the road map that we have in hand. Ayurveda is a map that first helps us to understand who we are and where we have begun. It shows us, too, the end of the journey where we find the ultimate goals of perfect health and enlightenment. Looking at this map, we can see where we are. In front of us are many roads. Some bring us to our goal, others lead us down paths that appear attractive, but which in the end mire us in the web of illusion causing us to forget the inner journey that we are on.

Let Ayurveda help you to remember. In the end, healing is remembering how to be healthy. Enlightenment is remembering how to be whole.

Namaste.

Dr. Marc Halpern
Director, California College of Ayurveda

Preface



Interest in Ayurvedic medicine, India's traditional natural healing system, continues to grow rapidly along with the worldwide return to traditional medicine. In recent years, Ayurveda has taken its place as one of the most important and innovative systems of mind-body healing available. Now many people are interested in learning and becoming practitioners of this profound science of life and establishing Ayurveda as a real medical profession in the West. This trend is bound to continue for decades to come as we enter a new era in which natural healing will supplement, if not begin to surmount, modern biochemical medicine.

This book is designed as an introduction to Ayurvedic medicine, both for interested students, and for informed lay people. It starts out at a basic level but goes thoroughly into its subject. It contains most of the information taught in two-year Ayurveda programs for foreign students in India, but specially oriented to a Western audience. Through it, the reader will gain a broad overview as well as specific views about this ancient science of life and longevity.

The book provides a detailed presentation of all the different branches of Ayurveda and their practical application in daily life. Most importantly, it deals with lifestyle disciplines, including daily, seasonal and yearly practices for optimal health which are the foundation for the Ayurvedic approach to right living.

In particular, we have added a special section on Ayurvedic diets by Dr. Marc Halpern, director of the California College of Ayurveda, who has also most kindly written the foreword. Dr. Halpern is one of the main pioneers of Ayurvedic education in the West and has worked tirelessly for this cause for several years.

Both of us have been engaged extensively in Ayurvedic teaching programs throughout the world for the last two decades. We hope that this book will be of value both to current and prospective students as well as the general public. Our hope is that it will assist in the proper understanding and application of Ayurveda in the West, and that it will encourage people to take up its practice. May it serve to bring the wisdom of life to its readers!

Dr. David Frawley

Dr. Subhash Ranade

PART ONE



The Ayurvedic Approach to Health



1 Ayurveda, the Science of Life: Historical and Philosophical Background

He who regards kindness to humanity as the
supreme religion, and treats his patients accordingly, best
succeeds in achieving all the aims of life
and obtains the greatest happiness.

— *Sushruta*

AYURVEDA AND MEDICINE TODAY

Ayurveda, "the science of life", is the traditional natural medicine of India dating back over five thousand years. It is a science, or way of knowledge about life, its powers and its resources. Yet Ayurveda is not a science artificially imposed upon living beings. Its basis is not found in mere chemistry, or in a mechanistic and materialistic view of the human body. Ayurveda is based upon a deep communion with the spirit of life itself, upon a profound understanding of the movement of the vital force and its manifestations within our entire psychophysical system.

As such, Ayurveda presents a striking alternative to the biochemical model of modern medicine, the limitations of which are becoming increasingly evident through time. We are not simply an accident or a design of chemistry but an expression of a living consciousness that is universal in nature – which is inherently wise and which has the power to balance and transform itself once its nature is understood. Reclaiming that connection with life as a whole is the real basis

of healing, not manipulating the life force with drugs, however useful they may be.

Ayurveda is a truly holistic medicine whose great wealth we have just begun to explore in the Western world. It is not merely a kind of antiquated folk medicine as it is sometimes considered to be. It is a science in its own right, with its own rationality and way of experimentation that is extraordinarily intricate and complete. Ayurveda is based upon the observation of living beings and their actual reactions to their environment, not on mere laboratory experiments that seldom address the living being.

Ayurveda classifies all the factors of our lives in an organic and energetic language that reflects the entire living biosphere around us. It shows how our individual constitution and disease tendencies reflect the forces of nature. It shows how foods, herbs, emotions, climates and lifestyles impact the dynamics of our own physiology and psychology that may be different for each person. This enables us to interact with life in an optimal manner both for our own benefit and that of the greater world in a symbiotic manner.

Ayurveda possesses probably the longest clinical experience of any medical system in the world, with a history of Ayurvedic hospitals and colleges going back well over three thousand years. It has carefully examined every sort of disease and life condition and their impact on health and well-being. It contains an intricate and sophisticated system of anatomy and physiology that follows a vitalistic model of the biological humors or doshas that shows us how our life-energies work and how to balance them.

Ayurveda reflects a deep study not only of the body but also the mind and the spirit beyond the mind and body. It reflects an in-depth system of psychology that understands the dynamics of karma and consciousness and how the physical world connects with those more subtle.

For treatment purposes, Ayurveda has created an extensive herbal and mineral industry, offering what is probably the greatest variety of herbal and pharmaceutical preparations available in the world. These include herbal wines, herbal jel-

lies, confections, resins, balsams, various pills and powders, and an extensive system of mineral and alchemical preparations that are unique in the entire world.

Ayurveda possesses a wealth of special clinical procedures, including the use of steam therapy, oil massage, and its own Pancha Karma methods of purification that include everything from enemas to nasal medications. It has special rejuvenation techniques for body and mind that strengthen immunity and retard aging, employing natural methods of diet, herbs, exercise, yoga and meditation.

Perhaps most significantly, Ayurveda uses all these approaches in the context of a greater science of self-care, including an entire methodology of right living for optimum health and the promotion of greater awareness and creativity tailored to the needs of each person. All of this follows a constitutional model that considers the unique nature of the individual as the primary factor in health, not disease as an entity in itself. Ayurveda is a humanistic and person-centered medicine that shows us how to find our own natural health and unfold our deeper energy potentials for the fullness of life, in which drugs and hospitals can become peripheral not primary.

While Western medicine focuses on identifying external pathogens and controlling disease from the outside, Ayurveda concentrates on the living individual and controlling disease through balancing the life-force within the person. As the limitations of antibiotic medicines are now evident today, with weakening immune systems and the return of contagious diseases once thought to be eradicated, such regimens for strengthening our internal energy and immune system are crucial for our health as a species and its survival through future decades. We can no longer simply try to change our environment for health or happiness, as if manipulating the outer will make us feel better on an inner level. We must learn how to develop and improve ourselves and our own internal resources, including not only how we eat and exercise, but also how we breathe and how we think. Ayurveda shows us how to do this and provides us with the knowledge and meth-

ods to facilitate the process.

As the traditional medicine of the subcontinent of India, Ayurveda reflects the profound spiritual culture of the region. It is an integral part of Vedic sciences that includes Yoga, Vedanta and Vedic Astrology. It brings us the entire cultural, spiritual and natural wisdom of the Himalayan region with knowledge of how the great yogis and seers cultivated their bodies and minds, and interacted with their natural environment, thus reaching the very source of creation in the cosmic mind.

This ancient and oriental Ayurveda is now spreading worldwide as one of the most important and innovative systems of mind-body medicine available today. As part of the global age, it has left its protective shell in India and is now entering the global arena for the benefit of all peoples. Soon Ayurveda will become an integral part of a new and more humane approach to health care everywhere. In the last ten years, interest in the subject has exploded, with the publishing of many books on Ayurveda and the opening of Ayurvedic centers throughout the Western world, indicating the beginning of a trend that is likely to continue for years to come.

The current crisis in health care, brought about by overreliance on chemical, mechanical and artificial treatment modalities, now demands the return of the natural, life and soul affirmative systems such as Ayurveda, with their lifestyle regimens for self-healing. Western medicine has become so expensive that it is draining both our personal and national resources. Unless we re-learn the art of self-healing, we will be drowned in drugs, medical testing and chronic diseases that leave us not only unhealthy but also financially insecure. This new move to self-healing is bound to be one of the most important developments in culture and in health care for the coming century.

Ayurveda is ushering in a health care revolution in which lifestyle, diet, exercise and meditation are more important than drugs and surgery, not only for health but also for improving vitality. It is helping us to reclaim our health and our vitality so that we can live the lives that we really want to live and

have the creativity and consciousness to make our sojourn on this planet both beautiful and beneficial, not only for ourselves but for all creatures. It is returning medicine to life and to our daily behavior, rather than reducing it to difficult hospital procedures with numerous side effects.

The Meaning and Purpose of Ayurveda

The word Ayurveda has a profound meaning that helps us understand its purpose. "Ayu" refers to all aspects of life from birth to death and all aspects of our nature from body to immortal spirit. It is the continuity and harmony between all that we are and all that we wish to be. "Veda" means knowledge or learning at the deepest level, the wisdom of this conscious universe that we can cognize within ourselves and in our own lives.

Ayurveda is the science by which life in its totality is understood. It describes the diet, medicines, and behaviors that are beneficial or harmful for life and consciousness. It provides a wealth of experiential knowledge and practical healing modalities for all people. Not surprisingly, Ayurveda is called "the mother of all healing" because it cares for all creatures as a mother does for her children. It rejects nothing that is beneficial for life but strives to integrate all valid healing methods in an understanding of how life itself operates.

The sages of ancient India bequeathed Ayurveda to mankind as part of the vast spiritual system of Vedic and yogic knowledge. Seeking out of compassion to alleviate the suffering of all creatures, they looked for all methods of removing pain. They created the system of Yoga to deal with spiritual suffering and Ayurveda to deal with mental and physical suffering. Ayurveda is thus one of the oldest and most comprehensive medical systems in the world, with an unbroken record of clinical experience going back to the dawn of human history.

However, Ayurveda is not only a system of medicine in the conventional sense of a methodology for treating disease. It is a way of life that teaches us how to maintain health and improve both our energy and our awareness – how to live life

to our full human and spiritual potential. Ayurveda shows us not only how to eliminate disease but how to promote longevity so that we can realize our goal in life, which is not just gaining material happiness but achieving profound spiritual realization. Ayurveda remains linked to a spiritual view of humanity and contains methods for connecting us to the greater universe that lies both within and around us.

Ayurveda treats the human being as a whole – a combination of body, mind, and immortal soul. It always considers the psychological and spiritual dimension of healing along with the physical in order to address our greater being and manifestation. This makes Ayurveda inherently a truly holistic and integral medical system such as many people are looking for in changing health care circumstances today. As various natural and alternative systems of medicine come to the forefront, and we once more rediscover the power of prayer and meditation, Ayurveda is becoming prominent as a system of medicine that has never forgotten these greater implications of healing. In our examination of Ayurveda, let us first look into the historical and philosophical background of this profound system.

HISORICAL BACKGROUND OF AYURVEDA

Ayurveda and the Vedic Period: 4000 – 2000 BCE

According to the views of India's great sages and yogis, the roots of Ayurveda go back to the very beginning of cosmic creation. The Vedic seers state that Ayurveda originates from Brahma, the creative intelligence behind the universe, from which the entire manifest world comes into being out of unmanifest cosmic laws. The desire to maintain fitness, health, and longevity is a basic instinct born in all creatures and is part of the will of the Creator. We all possess an innate healing power, such as the body demonstrates in its ability to heal itself, and we also have the potential to access and to magnify it.

Ayurveda reflects this medical knowledge inherent in life itself that is coterminous with creation and shows us how to use it in all of its facets. In this respect, Ayurveda sets the pattern for other systems of medicine. It is a tradition with an antiquity comparable to that of life itself. In fact, Ayurveda is said to originate from Prana, the life-force itself, which is the original power behind all creation. Ayurveda is a vehicle for connecting with the cosmic life-force and its unlimited transformative powers.

The *Vedas* are humanity's oldest record of spiritual knowledge, in fact humanity's oldest literature. The latest archaeological information coming out of India over the last two decades shows that the Vedic tradition is over five thousand years old in north India and represents the indigenous culture of the region that has maintained its continuity since the dawn of history. Civilization in India gradually developed from the Mehrgarh village complex of 7000 BCE that shows the beginning of agriculture, the world's first cattle rearing, and other factors that became typical of later Indian civilization. It developed steadily until around 3500 BCE when urban sites and traces of writing first arose.

By the third millennium BCE, ancient India contained the world's largest urban civilization, evidenced by such large cities as Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Dholavira. These sites extended from the Ganges in the east to Afghanistan in the west and from the coast of Iran to the region of Bombay. Originally called the "Harappan" or "Indus" civilization, it is now being renamed the "Sarasvati" or "Indus-Sarasvati" civilization because the great majority of its many sites occur on the banks of the long defunct Sarasvati River. This Harappan or Sarasvati River culture dominated north India until the Sarasvati River dried up, forcing people to move to wetter regions, particularly to the lush Ganges plain to the east. The demise of this river around 1900 BCE owing to geological changes brought this unique culture to an end.

The extensive Vedic literature reflects this Sarasvati culture, lauding the Sarasvati as the greatest river in India, while later classical Indian literature praises the Ganges in a similar

way. Ayurveda arose in the Vedic Sarasvati culture and the earliest Ayurveda is of this era, as reflected in the healing herbs and mantras of the *Vedas*, such as were probably the main medical methods of the Harappan cities.

The *Vedas* state that the Supreme Being who created the Universe out of love and compassion gave the *Vedas* to teach mankind how to live in harmony with universal law (dharma). The *Vedas* teach dharma or right living on all levels from physical health and social relationships to spiritual development. They reflect the power of cosmic creation and hold the keys to cosmogenesis, which includes the power of life and a higher evolution of consciousness beyond the human state to the divine.

The *Vedas* are composed of mantras that embody the very laws and energies of the universe, which are not merely inanimate forces but the powers of consciousness itself. The words of the *Vedas* were carefully memorized according to metrical chants and transmitted from generation to generation over thousands of years. The four *Vedas* – *Rig, Yajur, Sama* and *Atharva* – have come down to us through several thousand years of written and oral transmission.

The *Rig Veda*, the oldest of the four *Vedas*, already contains the main concepts of Ayurveda. Its three greatest Gods or cosmic powers – Indra, Agni, and Soma – relate to the three doshas or biological humors of Ayurveda: Vata (air), Pitta (fire), and Kapha (water). Indra is the deity of the air, atmosphere and Prana or the vital force. Agni is the deity of fire and the sun who consumes or eats all things. Soma is the inner waters of life represented by the moon as being indicative of food and the body.

Soma in the *Rig Veda* also relates to special herbal preparations used to treat the diseases of body and mind and to aid in longevity and rejuvenation. Such Vedic Somas were prepared from the juices of various herbs, particularly those picked from the high mountains, mixed or cooked along with milk, ghee, yogurt, sugar, honey, barley or gold. They were used not only for healing but also for elevating consciousness. While the exact preparation of these Vedic Somas was forgotten over

time, Ayurveda preserves similar methods of preparing special herbs and medicines.

The *Yajur Veda* sets forth the Vedic ritual, which among other goals, aims at giving us health and longevity. Those who perform these Vedic practices properly are said to live a happy life of a hundred years or more. Even today Ayurvedic doctors may prescribe such Vedic rituals or yajnas, particularly for dealing with diseases that are difficult to diagnose or to cure. The *Yajur Veda* also introduces the Ayurvedic ideas of the organs and tissues (dhatus) and discusses the five pranas.

The *Sama Veda* sets forth a musical chant that is said to bring health, harmony and well-being to body, mind and soul. Various *Sama Veda* chants (Samans) are credited with gaining special powers over the forces of nature, including the ability to create rain and, on a physical level, to harmonize the forces within the body in order to create longevity and immortality. Even today, Ayurveda stresses the importance of mantra, music and sound therapies for healing at a deep level.

Though all the *Vedas* contain references to Ayurvedic concepts, the *Atharva Veda* contains the most, so much so that Ayurveda is often considered to be an *Upaveda* or branch of *Atharva Veda*. The *Atharva Veda* contains references to specific herbs, the treatment of particular diseases, and other systematic knowledge about Ayurveda. The *Atharva Veda* is the more practical Veda dealing with the needs of daily life and the common people, whereas the other *Vedas* reflect more metaphysical concerns. Its special regard for health and herbs is therefore not surprising.

Ayurveda as an Upaveda or secondary Vedic text is connected with the other Upavedas:

- *Dhanur Veda* – martial arts
- *Sthapatya Veda* – sacred geometry and architecture
- *Gandharva Veda* – music and dance

The other Upavedas are also used in Ayurveda for their healing potentials. Dhanur Veda contains an intricate knowledge of the marmas or sensitive body points on the body and how to make the body strong and fit through exercise. Sthapatya

Veda shows the healing forces inherent in the directions and how to use these in building houses, temples and hospitals. Even today, Ayurvedic hospitals are constructed according to the rules of Sthapatya Veda, also called *Vastu*. Improper Vastu is still regarded as a cause of disease, while proper Vastu helps generate more healing prana in the environment. Gandharva Veda shows how music can heal the body and mind. It remains one of the best methods for treating prana at a deeper level and calming Vata dosha, the biological air humor. Such Vedic music, which is the basis for classical Indian music, is used to balance the elements within us and to harmonize us with temporal changes of day and night and the seasons of the year.

Ayurveda is connected with the *Vedangas* or limbs of the *Vedas* as well. These six limbs are:

- *Jyotish* – astrology
- *Kalpa* – ritual
- *Shiksha* – pronunciation
- *Vyakarana* – grammar
- *Nirukta* – etymology
- *Chandas* – metrics

Astrology (Jyotish), ritual (Kalpa) and mantra (which are the main concern of the four Vedangas of Shiksha, Vyakarana, Nirukta and Chandas) are important aspects of Ayurveda and reflect these Vedic connections. Of these six Vedangas, Vedic Astrology is perhaps the most significant.

Vedic Astrology is an important aid for the diagnosis and prognosis of disease, showing us when a disease is likely to occur, treatment remedies and prognosis of cure. It is also used in the timing of treatment and in the preparation of medicines, which are stronger if prepared under favorable lunar and planetary influences. Ayurveda and Vedic Astrology are closely intertwined on many levels and work well together as a comprehensive life-therapy. Ayurveda shows us how our life-force works and Astrology delineates the movement of our karma.

Mantra is one of the most important Ayurvedic treatment methods, particularly for the mind and the emotions. Ayurvedic practices are regarded as sacred rituals to put us in harmony with the benefic powers of the cosmos. They are generally sanctified and empowered with special mantras which bring healing forces into the conscious and subconscious mind and the soul.

Later Vedic texts bring in additional Ayurvedic insights. For example, the *Brahmanas* outline the five pranas and the seven tissues in detail. They project a seven-leveled fire altar as the seven aspects of the human being (microcosm) and the seven worlds of the universe (microcosm). The *Upanishads* teach the spiritual and psychological background of Ayurveda and its dedication to self-knowledge and the upliftment of consciousness. The *Mahabharata*, the great epic in which the *Bhagavad Gita* is found, contains specific sections on Ayurveda, explaining the doshas and their effects for both health and disease.

The Ashwini Kumars, the twin horsemen, are the main Vedic deities of Ayurveda, promoting health and rejuvenation on all levels. They are the miracle workers in the *Rig Veda* that heal the sick and raise the dead. These magical twins represent the dual nature of the life-force as expansion and contraction and the need to create balance, which is the essence of all lasting healing. The God Rudra, the Vedic prototype of Shiva, is also important as the original doctor, particularly for curing febrile diseases and for protecting us from injury.

The patron deity of Ayurveda specifically is Dhanvantari, first described in the *Puranas* as a king of Kashi (Benares), who is credited with discovering the immortal secrets of Ayurveda and first establishing the full medical system and propagating it through a school. He is said to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic power of preservation, who maintains health, harmony and well-being in creation.

FORMATIVE PERIOD OF AYURVEDA: 2000 – 300 BCE

Charaka and Sushruta

After the end of the Sarasvati culture, its knowledge was preserved and gradually reformulated over time. The spiritual and yogic aspect of medicine in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* was supplemented by observations based upon logic and experimentation. Ayurvedic scholars from subsequent generations explained Ayurveda in a more rational manner, but not forgetting the spiritual roots of the system. The medical material scattered in the *Vedas* was collected, tested for its efficacy and systematically arranged. Such compilations were called *Samhitas*, which literally means collections. Many of these compilations came into being and once existed, but today only three authentic works remain:

- *Charaka Samhita*
- *Sushruta Samhita*
- *Ashtanga Hridaya*

This great trio, or *Brihattrayi* as it is called, has enjoyed much popularity and respect for the last two thousand years. Although these texts underwent modifications and additions in subsequent periods, their core knowledge goes back to remote antiquity. They constitute perhaps the oldest, as well as the longest, medical texts in the world, with a wealth of information on all aspects of life, diet, behavior, herbs, health and disease. They are all written in the Sanskrit language.

Charaka Samhita (collection of the great teacher Charaka) is the oldest of the three and was probably first devised around 1500 BCE. The book remains the primary textbook of Ayurveda in India today. It describes the fundamental principles of Ayurveda, elaborating the physiological and anatomical structure of the human body, in which regard Ayurveda, emphasizing the living body, has many important insights. Charaka goes into the symptoms and signs of various diseases, including common conditions like diabetes and arthritis that still plague us today. His treatment methods for these dis-

eases using diet and herbs remain sound and helpful.

The book also explains the methodology for examination of patients and prognosis of disease. The preventive aspects of treatment include daily and seasonal regimens, dietetics and social behavior conducive to mental health. The chapter on dietetics in particular is a vast store of information. The section on curative treatments includes detailed descriptions of medicinal plants and their properties, herbal preparations, and therapeutic procedures such as elimination therapy. The chapters on rejuvenation therapy and prevention of the aging process are good sources for modern research work. The *Charaka Samhita* is written in prose as well as in beautiful poetry, comparable to any Sanskrit classic. Charaka represents the Atreya School of physicians, whose approach is mainly herbal.

Sushruta Samhita (the collection of the great teacher Sushruta) represents the Dhanvantari School of surgeons, which emphasizes surgery. In Ayurveda, Sushruta is the father of surgery. A great American society of surgeons today is named after Sushruta in honor of his pioneering work in the field. Sushruta calls surgery the first and foremost specialty of Ayurveda. He describes various surgical procedures including abdominal operations for intestinal obstructions and stones in the bladder, and delineates specialized procedures like plastic surgery. Sushruta was perhaps the first person to advocate knowledge of anatomy through the dissection of the body as essential for a good surgeon.

Sushruta Samhita contains sophisticated descriptions of many surgical instruments. Its classifications of fractures, wounds, abscesses and burns, as well as its procedures for plastic surgery and anal-rectal surgery, have all stood the test of time. Sushruta describes original concepts of pathogenesis of disease. The knowledge of anatomy – bones, joints, nerves, heart, blood vessels, and circulation – is surprising and praiseworthy. The description of the marmas or vital points in the body is comparable to the system of acupuncture points used in traditional Chinese medicine. Sushruta clearly states the importance of both theoretical and practical knowledge and

explains ways and means to develop surgical skill.

Later in Indian history, the philosophical emphasis on non-violence, which rejected surgery, got in the way of development of this branch of medicine and it declined. Yet even today, the *Sushruta Samhita* contains a great deal of useful material for research work, and Ayurvedic surgery is still practiced in India, though on a limited scale.

Thousands of medicinal herbs and their products, growing in diverse parts of the country in varied climates, are mentioned in both *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitas*. Diseases peculiar to different localities and seasons are found in them as well. *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitas* prove that a vast amount of scientific research, patient investigation, and experimentation must have gone on before the conclusions recorded in them were arrived at. This long formative period of Ayurveda may be roughly said to be from 2000 BC to 300 BCE. By this time, great university cities sprang up in India like Takshashila, Nalanda, Ujjain, Mithila and Varanasi (Benares). At this time the eight branches of Ayurveda were developed.

The Eight Branches of Ayurveda – Ashtanga Ayurveda

Classical Ayurveda as defined in Charaka and Sushruta, like classical Yoga, consists of eight limbs or branches:

1. Internal Medicine (Kayachikitsa)

Internal medicine is the main branch of Ayurveda that treats our entire nature. Ayurveda considers the human being as a whole, comprising body, mind, and soul. Mind and body affect each other and together form the seat of disease. The approach of Ayurveda from the very beginning is psychosomatic. Ayurveda groups all human beings into seven different types of psychophysical constitutions (Prakriti) according to the predominance of the three biological humors (doshas of Vata, Pitta and Kapha). It similarly groups them into seven psychological constitutions according to the predominance of

the three mental qualities (gunas of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). All these factors are taken into account during the treatment of disease. Diseases are caused by imbalances of the doshas or gunas, which in turn damage various tissues and systems.

Internal medicine mainly deals with diseases that have an internal or organic cause, as apart from injuries or poisons. A number of infectious diseases are described in Ayurveda but great importance is not given to pathogens as their cause. Ayurveda emphasizes internal factors, the condition of the individual behind all diseases, even those appearing to come from the outside. If the soil remains sterile, the seed will not grow. In the same way, if the internal energies are balanced, disease has no field in which to act.

The present book focuses on explaining these factors and their relationship as it is mainly concerned with the internal medicine branch of Ayurveda. This branch of Ayurveda often is regarded as encompassing the rest, which can be seen as aspects of it or additions to it.

2. Surgery (Shalyatantra)

Surgery is not just an invention of modern medicine but was already highly advanced in several ancient cultures, including India, Greece and Egypt. Its low condition in Europe during the Middle Ages was a period of decline, a temporary dark age, and was not indicative of its condition in ancient and Oriental cultures, where it remained more advanced. Ayurveda still contains some forms of surgery but this component of it has been declining. It was taken over more by allopathic medicine in India.

In the field of surgery, modern medicine has made great advances that Ayurveda must acknowledge and admire. But Ayurveda holds that surgery should be integrated with the other aspects of medicine in order to create a truly complete system of medicine. Surgery is not the only method of treatment, nor always the best, but it does have its importance and may have no alternative, particularly in dealing with traumatic injuries or large tumors where it is most appropriate.

3. Shalakya Tantra

This is the Ayurvedic branch of Ophthalmology and Otorhinolaryngology, the branch of medicine dealing with the diseases of the eyes, head and throat. Sushruta described seventy-two eye diseases along with surgical operations for such conditions as cataract and pterygium. Special techniques are described for many diseases of the ear, nose and throat that can be treated locally with various instruments and herbal applications.

4. Pediatrics (Kaumarabhritya)

This branch deals with prenatal and postnatal baby care and with the care of the mother both before conception and during pregnancy. Ayurveda describes special methods for conceiving a child of the desired sex, intelligence, and constitution. Various diseases of children and their treatment come under this branch. According to Ayurveda, the health of children is the key to the health of society. Right diet and exercise for children falls under this branch as preventive methods for diseases likely to occur later on in life.

5. Toxicology (Agadatantra)

This branch deals with the toxins and poisons of the vegetable, mineral and animal kingdoms and how they can adversely affect our health. Most interesting to note is that the concept of the pollution of air and water has been given due consideration. Such pollution is said to be the cause of various epidemics and the collapse of civilizations. Certain poisons, particularly in small doses, also have benefits as medicines.

6. Psychology (Bhutavidya)

Ayurveda is equally concerned with mental diseases and their treatment as it is with physical disorders. Ayurvedic treatment methods include not only physical methods like diet and herbs, but also yogic methods for improving the condition of the mind like pranayama, mantra and meditation. Generally, Ayurvedic doctors prescribe both types of ap-

proaches and stress their interrelationship. Bhuta literally means the influence of the past, and shows how previous karmas and mental patterns weigh down the mind and heart. So clearing of negative conditioning from the past is part of this branch of Ayurveda. There is ample material for further research on this branch in the *Vedas, Tantras,* and the Ayurveda *Samhitas.*

7. The Science of Rejuvenation (Rasayana)

Ayurveda addresses all the needs of life, which include how to prolong life and how to renew our vitality after disease or during the aging process. Rejuvenation therapy is used to prevent diseases and for promotion and extension of a healthy life. However, proper detoxification is an essential prerequisite for rejuvenation. A code of right conduct in life also has to be observed as part of the rejuvenation process, including meditation. Details of rejuvenation regimen in terms of diet and herbs have been described in detail in Ayurvedic texts.

8. The Science of Aphrodisiacs (Vajikarana)

Sexual energy is the root of bodily health and disease. This branch of Ayurveda deals with increasing sexual vitality and efficiency necessary for a happy sex life, health and for procreation. For achieving good progeny, the therapy of Rasayana and Vajikarana are closely interrelated. Vajikarana medicines also act as rejuvenatives because the sexual energy can function internally to revitalize our tissues and organs.

These eight branches of Ayurveda overlap and are connected in various ways. So we should not view them as separate but as integral parts of the same approach.

AYURVEDA, BUDDHISM AND AYURVEDA'S CLASSICAL PERIOD: 300 BCE – 1000 AD

The advent of Buddhism in Indian history affected all walks of life. During the period 300 BCE - 600 AD when Buddhism was popular in India, the progress of Ayurveda was well maintained. Various Buddhist authors made valuable contributions

to its literature. Most notable was a commentary on *Sushruta* by Nagarjuna, one of the most famous sages and Siddhas in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition who lived in Andhra Pradesh around two thousand years ago. The Medicine Buddha is also figured as one of the great teachers of Buddhist Ayurveda.

Yet the most remarkable thing about this period was that organized efforts were made to make the science as available as possible. Medicinal herbs were planted along the sides of public streets to be used freely by all. Many hospitals were formed. The art of nursing, which was described by Charaka, was widely practiced and systematized.

The knowledge of Ayurveda and of Indian culture spread far beyond the bounds of India. The nations of the then civilized world, including Rome, Greece, Persia and China, were attracted to India and students came from these countries to learn the sciences and arts of the land. The medical systems of Greece and Rome bear signs of the influence of Ayurveda from this period. India was considered the seat of learning for the world philosophers and scholars who visited India for study. Veterinary science was widespread in this period. Nagarjuna laid the foundation of *Rasa Shastra*, the use of alchemical preparations. A number of pharmaceutical preparations of Rasa medicines, special preparations of mercury, sulfur, and other minerals and certain poisonous substances were introduced in treatment.

The medical glory of India was perhaps at its zenith during this era. In the eighth century, Ayurvedic physicians of India were invited to Baghdad in the Middle East for consultation and were put in charge of hospitals there. The culture of India spread across the oceans to the south and east and across the mountains and plateaus to the north. The greater India of that day included Tibet to the north, Indochina and Indonesia to the east, and extended to the west through Afghanistan and into Persia. This greater India was not built by military conquest, nor by invasions or commercial exploitation, but by devoted and humanitarian monks and yogis who carried the sacred knowledge and means of healing, both spiritual and physical, to all who were open to it.

From the second century onward we find an increasing interest in *Rasakriya* or Ayurvedic pharmaceutical chemistry as part of a greater alchemical tradition. During the following six centuries, this study developed into a regular science (Siddha medicine) which was incorporated into Ayurveda. This form of Ayurveda is more popular in the south of India, though aspects of it are used throughout the country.

The next important authority in Ayurveda after Charaka and Sushruta is Vagbhatta of Sindh (the lower Indus valley), who flourished about the sixth century AD. His treatise called *Ashtanga Hridaya* presents a summary of Charaka and Sushruta with gleanings from other Ayurvedic writers and brings the subject up-to-date. He introduced a number of new herbs and made valuable modifications and additions to surgery. The whole book is written in succinct and beautiful poetry, making it easy to memorize. For this reason, it remains a favorite for students learning Ayurveda today. Vagbhatta mentions Buddhist deities and teachers. Tibetan medicine is also based upon commentaries on Vagbhatta.

During this time, the main Ayurvedic texts were translated into Arabic. The Unani or Islamic system of medicine, which the Arabs developed out of the older Greek medicine, was to a great extent founded on Ayurvedic knowledge from India. The Indian Unani system, which grew up under Muslim rule in India, never lost touch with its parental source and even today works with many Ayurvedic herbs and principles.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD AND THE DECLINE OF AYURVEDA: 1000 – 1750 AD

The Muslim invasion of India began in the eighth century and brought about a conquest of most of the country in the thirteenth century. It resulted in a series of devastating wars lasting into the eighteenth century that caused a great decline in the classical culture of India, including Ayurveda. The conquest and its anti-Hindu and anti-Buddhist crusades weakened the older culture and made it difficult to maintain the traditional arts and sciences. Many universities, monasteries

and temples, which were repositories of Ayurveda, were destroyed, including Takshashila, Nalanda and Mithila. Faced with this assault, Ayurveda withdrew into the villages and into family centers. Many Ayurvedic teachers retreated to the south of the country or to the Himalayas where there was more safety from the wars.

The medieval period is dominated by the name of Madhava, a great devotee of Vishnu, who in the twelfth century wrote several works embracing almost all branches of Hindu learning from Yoga and religion to Ayurveda. His medical work named *Madhava Nidana* deals exclusively with the diagnosis of diseases. During the Muslim period, up to the eighteenth century, activity in Ayurveda was mainly focused on Rasakriya or alchemical preparations. Chakrapani and Vrinda wrote systematic works on the subject. Narhari Pandita and Madanpal wrote two masterpieces on medicinal herbs, *Raja Nighantu* and *Madanpala Nighantu*. Sharangdhara in the fourteenth century systematized various materia medicas and his is still a most popular and reliable treatise on the subject. *The Sharangdhara Samhita, Madhava Nidana,* and *Bhava Prakasha* are regarded as the *Laghu Traya* or *Junior Triad* of Ayurvedic classics.

The next celebrated writer on Ayurveda is Bhavamishra, the author of *Bhava Prakasha*. This physician lived in the sixteenth century and was considered to be the best scholar of his time. His style is simple and delightful to read. In the time of Bhavamishra, India began to come into contact with the European nations, first the Portuguese, then the French and British.

THE BRITISH ERA: 1750 – 1950

The advent of the British rule in India, which began in the mid-eighteenth century, was a landmark in the further decline of Ayurveda. The British not only denied state patronage to Ayurveda, they took a negative attitude toward the entire system, regarding it as backward or superstitious. The

East India Company closed down all existing schools of Ayurveda in the Indian subcontinent. Yet in spite of suppression and the lack of patronage, Ayurveda remained popular with the masses and still served about eighty percent of the population of the country, passed on mainly through apprenticeship.

This period marked the beginning of Ayurveda's encounter with Western medicine, including not only allopathy but also homeopathy, with which it had a greater affinity.

AYURVEDA IN INDIA TODAY

The national awakening along with the Indian independence movement during the early twentieth century brought about the establishment of national schools and universities and encouraged the revival of Ayurveda. Different state governments in India started regular teaching of Ayurveda and established state boards, faculties and councils of Indian medicine. Modern Ayurveda came to be taught along with allopathic medicine and has sought to explain its traditional methods in modern, scientific terms.

Over fifty universities in India now have faculties of Ayurveda affiliated with over one hundred Ayurvedic colleges. Presently the government of India has initiated a more open policy and allows the founding of more private Ayurvedic institutions. Many new Ayurvedic schools are arising all over the country today. In 1998 the Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee, emphasized the importance of Ayurveda in dealing with the health care needs of the country, particularly of the villages. In the next decade the scope of Ayurvedic education in India is likely to expand greatly.

However, Ayurveda in India today is still given a back seat to allopathy and is often insufficiently funded. For this reason, Ayurvedic schools and hospitals may look inferior to those of modern medicine. It is not the backwardness of Ayurveda that makes them so but the lack of resources to maintain them. Meanwhile, many new Ayurvedic spas have opened in hotels

in India, particularly in the south of the country, to provide Ayurveda as a form of lifestyle and health maintenance discipline. These spas are becoming very popular with tourists and foreign Ayurveda students.

GLOBAL AYURVEDA AND THE FUTURE

In the last few decades, Ayurveda has gone global as part of the resurgence of traditional and natural forms of healing. It is now represented by courses and clinics throughout the world with a growing literature in many different languages. Popular Ayurvedic books have appeared in the West by a wide variety of authors. This new interest in Ayurveda is not merely as an ancient form of healing but as a futuristic mind-body medicine that can help us deal with all the stresses and anxieties of our hectic modern lifestyle.

Ayurveda is recognized by WHO (the World Health Organization) as one of the most important medical traditions in the world, necessary for global health. New research on Ayurvedic herbs and treatment methods is occurring in modern medical circles as well. This growing worldwide interest in Ayurveda is helping it to regain its prestige in India, which is still looking to the West for cultural innovations.

The spread of Ayurveda to the West marks an important new era in the resurgence of Ayurveda after a thousand years in which it was under siege. Ayurveda in the twenty-first century looks to re-inherit its glory of ancient times as one of the most important forms of natural medicine practiced in the world. This new global Ayurveda seeks to integrate it into other naturalistic healing modalities, using Ayurveda with its understanding of constitution as an umbrella to bring all forms of healing together. Under Ayurveda's understanding of constitution, all treatment methods have their place and can be recognized for their value. In this way, Ayurveda can employ homeopathy, herbalism, allopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic and other medical modalities.

The global mind is particularly interested in the spiritual

and yogic side of Ayurveda, which is uniquely developed in the system and is notably lacking in Western medical systems. The new global or planetary Ayurveda is also reclaiming its spiritual roots and reconnecting with Yoga, which is already popular worldwide, and with other Vedic sciences like Vedic Astrology. This Ayurveda of the future will take Ayurveda to new heights and make it available for all humanity, not just as a physical medicine but as a complete set of human resources for optimal living and the development of higher consciousness.

PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND OF AYURVEDA

Vedic Systems

Ayurveda is not only a science, but also a philosophy reflecting a deep understanding of the entire universe. All Indian sciences have a basis in philosophy or a view of the meaning of life. Such philosophies are not merely intellectual systems but reflect profound meditative and yogic insight. Ayurveda, which deals with life, observes nature and the universe for its attributes and actions. Ayurveda accepts the Vedic view that the microcosm (individual) and macrocosm (universe) are interrelated and that man is a replica of nature. Hence, Ayurveda is concerned with theories of evolution and the creation of the universe.

The different philosophies of India deal with the process of creation from various points of view. Six systems of philosophy or perception (*Shat Darshana*) called Vedic systems, rely upon the *Vedas* as their authority. There are other Indian philosophies not based upon the Vedas called non-Vedic systems, but even these share a common basis in dharma or cosmic law. Ayurveda mainly derives through the Vedic systems.

Nyaya-Vaisheshika

Nyaya and Vaisheshika are systems of logical philosophy, similar to the classical Western philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. They form the basis of the six systems of Vedic philosophy

and their logical and dialectic approaches. They provide some of the prime concepts for Ayurveda. The Nyaya system deals with the means of knowledge, or proofs, and accepts four means of right knowledge:

1. Direct perception via the senses and mind (Pratyaksha)
2. Inference (Anumana)
3. Analogy (Upamana)
4. Testimony or the word spoken by an authority (Shabda)

Ayurveda accepts these four forms of knowledge. Its diagnostic measures are based upon observation and inference. The concepts of the doshas or biological humors reflect the analogy of the elements of air, fire and water. Ayurvedic texts like *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitas* are regarded as authoritative testimony on health and disease.

Vaisheshika presents an atomic theory of creation. According to it, earth, water, light (fire), and the principle of motion (air) are based upon elemental particles. The mind also exists as a single atom in every individual. Ayurveda similarly states that the body develops from the union of various elemental particles and that the mind possesses an atomic nature. By changing the composition and relationship between these elemental particles, we can bring health and harmony to body and mind.

According to Vaisheshika, the diversity observable in the universe derives from the transformation of the atoms of earth (gross matter) that results from their contact with heat. Ayurveda accepts this theory and states that all the transformations in the body, both creative and destructive, occur owing to the existence of the fire principle (Agni) in the body. If this heat principle is normal, health is maintained and if it is abnormal, disease results. Death occurs when Agni ceases to function in the body.

According to Vaisheshika, substances, qualities and actions increase similar conditions in the body. This is the simple principle of *like increases like*. Antagonistic substances, qualities and actions decrease these same factors. This is the principle

of *treatment through opposites* – that conditions are generally balanced or cured by an application of opposite qualities. For maintaining health and curing disease, one has to understand these similarities and contraries. The Ayurvedic principle of treatment is to use either similar or antagonistic means according to the requirements of the condition. This is another principal brought from Vaisheshika.

Ayurvedic pharmaceutical theory is based upon the Vaisheshika description of substance, quality and action (dravya, guna, and karma). Substances (dravya) create actions (karma) according to their qualities (guna). For example, hot substances like steam produce hot actions like sweating according to their qualities, which is to increase heat. Ayurveda describes twenty qualities to explain the action of foods and herbs. All substances are applied according to the principles of similarity and contrariety.

Samkhya and Yoga

Samkhya and Yoga form the second pair of Vedic philosophies and have a deeper and more spiritual orientation. Yoga is represented by the Raja Yoga system of Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras* which is regarded as the main text of the Yoga school. Patanjali codified the older yoga tradition into two hundred brief aphorisms. The original founder of the Yoga system was the legendary sage Hiranyagarbha.

Samkhya is the cosmological and philosophical view behind Yoga. Its founder is the legendary ancient sage Kapila, who existed before Buddha and Krishna. Its main text is the *Samkhya Karika* of Ishvara Krishna (a figure different from the Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita*), who lived in the early centuries AD. Just as Patanjali compiled the older Yoga tradition in the form of his *Yoga Sutras*, so Ishvara Krishna compiled the older Samkhya tradition in the *Samkhya Karika*. *Samkhya Karika,* like *Yoga Sutras,* is a key text not only for students of Samkhya and Yoga but also for those of Ayurveda.

Though it uses important principles from Nyaya-Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga provide the background phi-

losophy and main principles for Ayurveda. The Samkhya theory of creation does not stop at the level of five elements like that of Vaisheshika, but outlines the working of the mind and senses. It ultimately posits two eternal principles of Primal Nature or Prakriti and the inner Self or Purusha, pure consciousness.

Samkhya teaches that Prakriti is composed of the three gunas, or qualities, of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas - the principles of harmony, disturbance and inertia. These gunas exist behind all substances in the universe which are ultimately forms of experience for consciousness. Everything is a manifestation of Sattva, Rajas or Tamas.

Samkhya describes the different levels of knowledge through which we can understand both ourselves and the world around us. Five categories of knowledge exist at the level of the five sense organs relative to the five different sensory impressions of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. These reflect the five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth.

Three categories of knowledge exist at the level of the mind – pleasurable, neutral, or painful. Samkhya explains these according to the three gunas: Sattva brings lasting happiness, Rajas causes pain in the long run (though it may bring short-term pleasure), and Tamas creates dullness or lack of feeling.

The process of knowing occurs at the level of the intellect (buddhi), which determines right and wrong, true and false, good and bad. Yet the intellect is merely an instrument and is not itself the origin of knowledge. There must be another principle responsible for knowing and it must be ever-knowing. Samkhya calls this principle the *Purusha* or pure consciousness and looks to it as the basis of our self-identity. Our sense of self does not derive from any external object or even from our body but is inherent, spontaneous and self-existent, deriving from consciousness itself.

The Purusha is the ultimate subjective principle of consciousness, just as Prakriti is the ultimate objective principle of materiality. These two, Prakriti and Purusha, are the ulti-

mate, causeless, omnipresent, and all pervasive causes of the universe. When they combine, creation starts and when they get separated, creation comes to an end. The ending of creation according to Samkhya is the merging of creation back into its origin or the effect back into its cause (Prakriti).

The soul in living beings reflects the Purusha, while the material vestures including body, mind and intellect derive from Prakriti. The aim of Samkhya is to provide detachment and liberation to the Purusha, by helping us understand both Purusha and Prakriti and her manifestations. The permanent detached state of the soul is the absolute state of joy or ananda that is everlasting. Yoga provides the methods to purify the mind in order to help bring this about.

Ayurveda accepts the absolute detachment of the soul and describes the highest goal of treatment as the state of liberation in which the soul is no longer bound to the space-time creation and regains its immortal nature. Yet Ayurveda also considers the state of Prakriti or our mind-body condition as the foundation for pursuing liberation, which requires physical vitality and mental insight in order to realize. Ayurveda does not advise neglect of the body, but stresses the need to maintain it and infuse it with vigor in order to achieve both the worldly and spiritual goals of life. At the same time, Ayurveda recommends self-restraint to cultivate detachment and to make efforts for Self-realization.

Ayurveda considers the Purusha (soul) associated with Prakriti (the body or material nature) as the real individual for the practical purposes of treatment. This is the soul in its state of bondage as apart from the transcendent Purusha beyond all sorrow. It is the soul associated with mind, prana and body. In this way, Ayurveda addresses the needs of all levels of people, not just those seeking liberation, who are usually few in this material world.

From these two basic principles of Prakriti and Purusha, Samkhya outlines the main principles of existence, shown in the following table:

Purusha – Pure Consciousness

1. Nature – Prakriti (Composed of three gunas)		
2. Mahat or Buddhi – Intelligence or Intellect		
3. Ahamkara – Ego or I-sense		
Sattvic Ahamkara Vaikritika (Diversified)	Rajasic Ahamkara Taijasa (Radiant)	Tamasic Ahamkara Bhutadi (Origin of Elements)
4. Manas (Mind) 5-9. Five Sense Organs of ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose 10-14. Five Motor Organs of speech, hands, feet, emission and reproduction	Interrelationship Through Prana	15-19. Five Tanmatras or sensory impressions of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell 20-24. Five Elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether

Ego or Ahamkara is the root of all the diversity that we experience both subjectively and objectively. So too, the way to harmony is to transcend ego to our deeper soul and intelligence that is not limited or disturbed by the ego's involvements.

Ayurveda uses this scheme of the sense organs, motor organs, tanmatras, elements and gunas, accepting the Samkhya system of the tattvas or cosmic principles. Ayurveda, one could say, is the Samkhya vision projected into the biological sphere.

In addition, Samkhya teaches the law of transformation (Parinamavada). Prakriti, as a composition of the three gunas, is always in a state of flux. Due to the endless combinations of these three basic qualities, changes occur at every moment. Ayurveda accepts this law of transformation and explains it as the reason for creation and destruction, occurring both in the body and in the external world. It aims at helping us understand the nature (Prakriti) of both body and mind so that we can use their natural transformations to further our goals

in life.

The three gunas of Samkhya are very important in Ayurvedic thought and treatment, particularly for the mind. Increase in Sattva, the quality of purity, gives right knowledge to the intellect, provides courage and determination to avoid harmful things and gives an alert memory. Ayurveda recommends various methods to increase Sattva by the regulation of diet and behavior. On the other hand, an increase in either Rajas or Tamas, the qualities of agitation and dullness in the mind, is responsible for wrong decisions, fearfulness and loss of memory. Rajas and Tamas are the mental doshas or toxins that cause psychological disease, which in turn contributes to physical disease.

The Yoga system aids Ayurveda by providing it specific methods for increasing Sattva, decreasing Rajas and Tamas, and balancing the mind. To achieve this, Yoga provides a regimen called yama and niyama, various ethical and lifestyle principles like non-violence, truthfulness, cleanliness and contentment. Yogic methods of asana, pranayama and meditation are included in Ayurveda both for lifestyle practices and for the treatment of disease, particularly of a psychological nature, and can be very important healing methods. Indeed, Yoga therapy, using the methods of Yoga to treat disease, is traditionally part of Ayurveda, which itself can be called "yogic medicine".

Ayurveda uses other yogic approaches including devotion (Bhakti), knowledge (Jnana) and Tantric modalities, adapting the whole range of yogic approaches from ritual and mantras to formless meditation. These are also important parts of its rejuvenation therapy and its treatment of the subtle body. Note the chapter on "Yoga and Ayurveda."

Vedanta and Mimamsa

The third pair of Vedic systems is *Mimamsa* and *Vedanta* (also called *Purva Mimamsa* and *Uttara Mimamsa*). Mimamsa explains the ritualistic interpretation of the *Vedas* and prescribes various rituals, mainly fire offerings, for obtaining happiness

in this world and in the after life, including rituals to cure disease and promote longevity. Vedanta deals with the ultimate liberation of the soul and its union with God, which occurs through meditation.

These two philosophies have also contributed to Ayurveda. Mimamsa states that every soul or Purusha is everlasting and travels through the great cycle of birth and death. One experiences pain or pleasure according to the deeds or karmas performed in this or previous lives. The incurability of certain diseases is explained in Ayurveda by this law of karma. Not all diseases are amenable to physical or even to psychological treatment. Some diseases occur owing to karma and must be experienced, or can only be alleviated by spiritual or religious purification methods, like charity, prayer and meditation.

The Ayurvedic view of the inherent freedom of the Soul (Atman) from all bonds of sorrow and the ultimate union of the individual soul with the universal soul is taken from Vedanta. Ayurveda, like Vedanta, is based upon the principle of self-knowledge and aims at self-realization, the knowledge of the One or Divine Self in all beings. Ayurveda directs us back to our True Nature beyond time and space as the ultimate source of all healing, peace and happiness. This is the basis of the Yoga of knowledge (Jnana Yoga), such as taught by the modern teacher Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Theistic Vedantic systems also exist and are very important to the Yoga of devotion (Bhakti Yoga), worshipping the Creator in diverse forms as Vishnu (including Rama and Krishna), Shiva, Devi (the Goddess) and other forms like Ganesh and Hanuman. These various forms reflect the different temperaments of human beings and different spiritual paths, covering the full range of relationships with the Divine as father, mother, beloved, friend or master. This allows each individual to worship the Divine in whatever form and manner that they choose.

Ayurveda recognizes the role of the Creator, and that worship and prayer have great healing powers for both body and mind. It also recognizes that different forms of the Di-

vine are more appropriate for certain individual constitutions than for others, and that finding the right form of the Divine to worship greatly improves our health and vitality. These views it derives from theistic Vedantic systems.

Non-Vedic Philosophies and Ayurveda

While Ayurveda is based primarily on Vedic philosophies, it was also used from the perspective of Buddhist, Jain and other non-Vedic philosophies, from which it has borrowed certain points. These philosophies share many common themes with the Vedic systems like the principle of Dharma (natural law), the belief in karma and rebirth, and the practice of Yoga and meditation. They similarly emphasize non-violence and natural healing. They differ mainly in philosophical ideas as to the nature of ultimate reality.

Both Buddhist and Jain systems are non-theistic and do not posit a Creator. They see karma alone as the cause of living beings. Vedic systems contain theistic systems that posit a Creator (Ishvara), but also non-theistic systems as well (for example, many forms of Samkhya are non-theistic). Jainism recognizes a Purusha (higher Self) but not a Supreme Being or pure existence (Brahman) as do most Vedantic systems, and sees the liberation of the individual Purusha as the highest goal. In this regard, Jainism resembles Samkhya. Buddhism does not posit an Atman or Purusha (higher Self) and regards the non-Self (Anatman) as the highest reality. However, it does recognize a higher awareness or Buddha mind that in many respects resembles the Vedic Purusha that is similarly a state of pure seeing and pure awareness.

Jain thinkers state the law of uncertainty, or all probabilities (syadvàda), holding that any number of points of view are always possible on any subject. From the standpoint of diagnosis and treatment, Ayurveda accepts this law of probabilities. One cannot definitely know all such factors and so one's approach should always be flexible. There is no ultimate or final diagnosis or treatment but just various angles of approach, each with its own particular value and its limita-

tions. If one approach does not work, one should try another.

Jainism emphasizes non-violence or ahimsa as the supreme principle. Ayurveda strives to create a healing approach that is free of violence, cruelty and harm to other creatures and to the environment. That is why it emphasizes vegetarian diet and herbal medicine. Most Buddhist and Vedic systems emphasize non-violence as well.

The Buddha teaches that creation is a momentary affair. Each thing gets destroyed in the following moment. Ayurveda uses this law as a part of treatment. A disease gets destroyed of its own accord and health gets reestablished when the causative factors that produce the disease, like wrong diet, are eliminated. Ayurvedic treatment seeks to remove the cause of disease so that health will return automatically.

Buddhism teaches emptiness or Shunyata as the ultimate truth. Ayurveda recognizes that emptiness, space and silence have great healing potentials for the body as well as for the mind. Buddhism also lauds compassion. Ayurveda is based upon compassion, the desire to see an end of suffering for all creatures, as part of its motivation for practice.

Since all the important Indian philosophies have contributed to the development of Ayurveda, a study of their principles is helpful for all students of Ayurveda. Ayurveda has a place for the knowledge found in all the great philosophies of the world because its aim is the maximum integration of human knowledge toward the maximum fulfillment of life. It has room for all views that promote healing, balance, harmony, understanding and peace.

Ayurveda says that just as different individuals require different diets, so too they require different philosophies and spiritual paths. What is a good spiritual path for one person may not be good for another, just as the diet and behavior for one type may not work for another. In this way, different names and forms of God and the Goddess, or theistic and non-theistic approaches can all be harmonized as each has its value. Reflecting the great abundance and diversity of nature, Ayurveda recommends a free and pluralistic approach to truth

so that each person can find what is appropriate for their own unique nature and potentials on all levels from health to self-realization. Ayurveda, like the beauty of life, embraces all points of view in a higher harmony of creation and transformation.



2 The Enduring Principles of Ayurveda



There is no end to learning Ayurveda. You should carefully and constantly devote yourself to its study. Increase your skill by learning from others without jealousy. The wise regard the whole world as their teacher, while the ignorant consider it to be their enemy.

—*Charaka*

Ayurveda is a science of positive health and fulfillment in life. It aims at providing us the optimal energy and intelligence to live long and happily and to contribute to the welfare of the world. It helps us understand the effects of all our actions from eating and sleeping, to work and study, prayer and meditation. The aim of Ayurveda is threefold:

- To achieve positive health for the individual
- To aid in the upliftment of society
- To facilitate ultimate liberation of the spirit

Ayurveda offers daily and seasonal health regimens for achieving optimal health. These show us how to adjust our behavior to best benefit from our individual nature and from the unique circumstances of our lives. This additional energy should be used not only for improving our own life expression, but also to help others less fortunate than ourselves and to engage in spiritual practices to raise the consciousness in the world. In this way, Ayurveda helps us develop energy for the benefit of all creatures.

This Ayurvedic approach is based upon extending our basic urge to preserve our life. From birth we possess the instinct to protect the body from pain and harm. Similarly, our mind possesses an instinct to avoid suffering and conflict. To remain continuously healthy and achieve liberation involves eradicating all the factors that bring about sorrow. Ayurveda identifies these factors and provides practical methods to remove them. It teaches us how to master our character and the outer circumstances of our lives.

Ayurveda bases itself upon an understanding of universal substances, particularly the five great elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether, which do not change their properties. The Moon and water act as cooling agents, while the Sun and fire function to increase heat. The properties of such forces are demonstrated naturally as a matter of common experience. Proof by laboratory techniques is not required. For example, we do not need an experiment to prove that fire burns; its burning quality is evident in all that it does. We must learn to observe all the energies at work in our lives in a similar way.

The drugs employed in modern medicine have been changing rapidly since their inception, while the basic nature of the human body continues to remain the same. The medicine of one generation therefore becomes ineffective or even harmful for the next. The antibiotics that help one generation become the bane of another. When the drugs used for a short period of time cease to be helpful, it indicates that there is something fundamentally wrong with our entire approach to healing, that we have not penetrated to the enduring principles behind life. Contrary to this variability in modern medicine, the principles and methods of Ayurveda have remained constant through time. This is because Ayurveda proceeds from an understanding of the unchanging laws of the universe, rather than merely from following human invention.

Ayurveda recognizes a common origin for the universe and for humanity. The human being is a miniature replica of the greater world and contains the same forces of creation and

destruction. The universe is a single organism with a single consciousness and is itself a living being.

For the creation of the universe, two types of substances are required – material and nonmaterial. Material substances create the outer form of things, while nonmaterial factors provide their inner qualities. Material substances, like the five elements, are responsible for the measurable aspect of things, while nonmaterial substances or ideas impart their meaning. Both substances are present in each person.

The Three Gunas or Primary Qualities of Nature

Nature consists of three primary qualities, called gunas in Sanskrit, as introduced in the discussion of Samkhya and Yoga in the previous chapter.

1. Sattva	Consciousness or intelligence
2. Rajas	Motion or action
3. Tamas	Inertia which resists them

These three inner qualities exist behind all material forms in Nature. Their contribution is essential for the creation of anything in the universe. Underlying idea (Sattva), motivating energy (Rajas), and sustaining inertia (Tamas) are the three factors behind the existence of any substance. These three primary qualities, being common to all forms, do not possess a specific form of their own and are known only by their effects. They are called "nonmaterial substances" because they have no particular form but still are a kind of substance or principle of objectivity.

The three gunas manifest in human beings in our temperament, constitution and behavior, which reflect either intelligence (Sattva), agitation (Rajas) or inertia (Tamas). The gunas determine the quality of our lives and whether we are growing in consciousness (Sattva), expanding in ego (Rajas), or simply stagnating in ignorance (Tamas). They are the pri-

mary essences behind all that we do, through which we can understand the direction and motivation of our lives. According to Samkhya philosophy, the gunas underlie all aspects of Nature (Prakriti) starting with cosmic intelligence (Mahat).

THE FIVE GREAT ELEMENTS

The five great elements (Pancha Mahabhutas) of ether, air, fire, water, and earth form the basic material constituents of both the universe and the human being. These elements refer to the etheric, gaseous, radiant, fluid, and solid states of matter and their respective principles of space, movement, light, cohesion, and density. They are not merely elements in the chemical sense but different densities of matter. The elements themselves are much subtler than their visible counterparts on Earth. They are the prime substances from which different objects are made, unlike the gunas that are the qualities or ideas according to which they are made.

The elements, we could say, provide the clay from which a pot is made, while the gunas are responsible for making it beautiful or ugly. While the elements provide the quantitative aspect of things, like their size and density, the gunas are responsible for their qualitative meaning. According to the Samkhya system, the elements evolve from the ego (Ahamkara), which is the force of differentiation latent in creation.

Each of these prime elements possesses a characteristic property through which we can apprehend it through the senses. The knowable property of ether is sound; that of air is touch; that of fire is sight; that of water is taste; and that of earth is smell. We grasp these properties through the corresponding five sense organs of the ear, skin, eye, tongue, and nose. Each element similarly possesses a secondary property that can be felt through the skin. These are non-resistance (ether), vibration (air), change of temperature (fire), fluidity (water), and shape (earth). The skin can feel the effects of all five elements indirectly.

The Five Elements

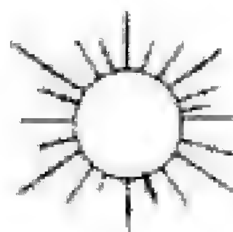
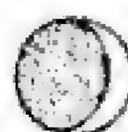
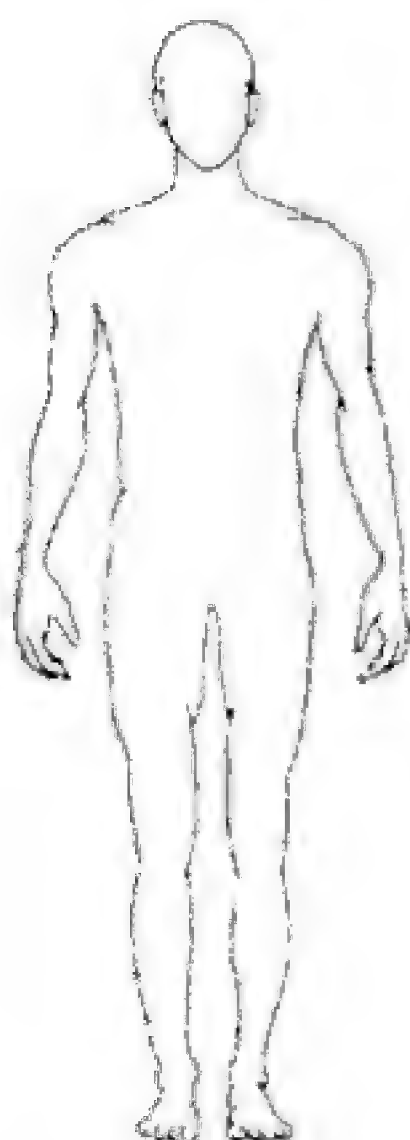
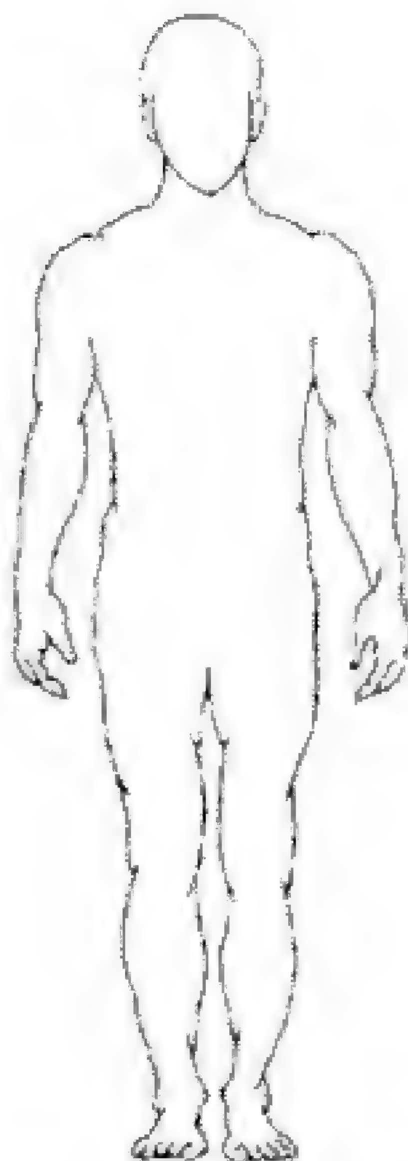
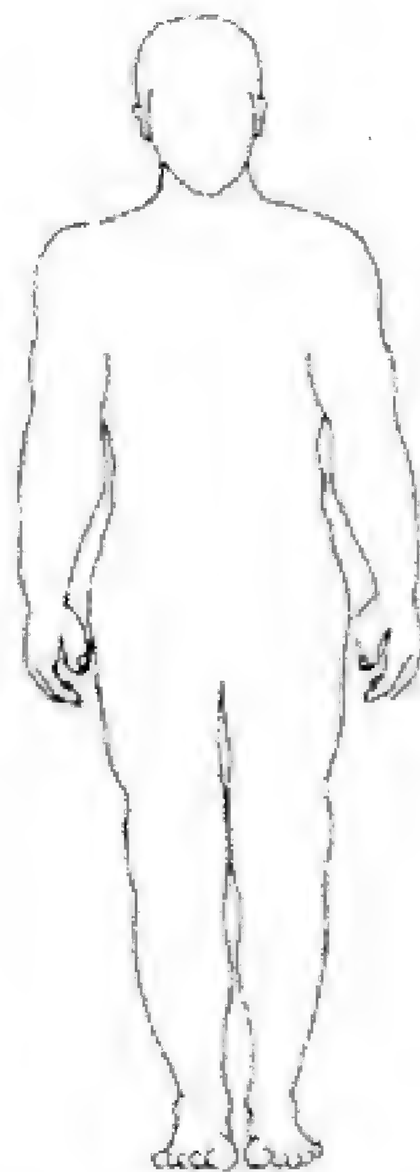
Elements	Sanskrit Name	Primary Property	Secondary Property	Characteristic
Ether	Akasha	Sound	Non-resistance	Subtlety
Air	Vayu	Touch	Vibration	Movement
Fire	Tejas	Appearance	Heat and Color	Transformation
Water	Apas	Taste	Fluidity	Liquefaction
Earth	Prithivi	Smell	Solidity	Density

TRIDOSHA THEORY: The Three Biological Humors

Ayurveda explains all bodily functions relative to corresponding movements in the outer universe. The three main forces in the external world are the Sun, Moon and Wind that govern all processes in nature. The Sun is the energy of transformation represented by fire. It relates to Pitta or the biological fire humor in the human being. The Moon is the agency of cooling represented by the combination of earth and water. It relates to Kapha, the biological water humor within us. The Wind is the principle of movement or propulsion represented by the combination of air and ether. It relates to Vata, the biological air humor. The Sun causes things to grow through its heat and light. The Moon nurtures things through its watery and emotional influence. The Wind stimulates things by its movement and fluctuations.

All activities in the universe occur according to the three basic functions of creation, preservation, and destruction. These are the actions of three main Hindu Gods of *Brahma, Vishnu* and *Shiva* - the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe. These three functions also relate to the three biologi-

Vata Body Type	Pitta Body Type	Kapha Body Type

cal humors or doshas. Vata, the energetic humor, controls destruction. We can observe this destructive action of Vata or Wind in earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones and tornadoes. Pitta, the thermogenic humor, builds up the body after the transformation of food through the process of digestion. This is akin to fire constructing landmass through volcanic action. Kapha, the cohesive humor, is responsible for maintaining the creation, which is why the body consists mainly of water.

Relationship of the Five Elements to the Three Energy Principles in the Universe

Wind - Vata Dosha	Air and Ether, Movement & Space	Principle of Propulsion
Sun - Pitta Dosha	Fire, Energy	Principle of Conversion and Transformation
Moon - Kapha Dosha	Earth and Water, Density & Cohesion	Principle of Preservation

Relationship of Elements, Gunas and Doshas

Ether	Sattva
VATA	Sattva + Rajas
Air	Rajas
Fire	Sattva + Rajas
PITTA	Sattva + Rajas
Water	Sattva + Tamas
KAPHA	Sattva + Tamas
Earth	Tamas

From Ether as pure sattva the other four elements evolve, with Earth as pure tamas. Air is the principle of motion (rajas). Fire has both sattva (illumination) and rajas (heat and passion). Water has sattva (transparency and receptivity) and tamas (inertia). All events observable in the universe are caused by one of these three energies:

- Vata – Agency of propulsion
- Pitta – Agency of transformation
- Kapha – Agency of cohesion

The energy of propulsion causes changes in position, like clouds in the sky that follow the direction in which the wind

blows. In the body, functions like respiration, heartbeat, and the expulsion of waste products are manifestations of change in position. In the mind, this function is motivation, through which mental activities take place. These follow the movement of Vata dosha or the air-humor.

While the energy inside the body is termed Vata, which means "wind", Vata should not be simply equated with wind as a physical force. Vata as wind is an analogy. Vata is any propulsive force and the principle of movement generally on the level of the life-force (Prana). The seat of this dosha is the lower part of the large intestine or rectum. The function manifested in this organ, the drying of waste matter by removing the liquid portion, resembles the desiccating effect of the wind.

When a substance comes in contact with the heat of the Sun, it changes temperature, form, appearance or taste. In the human body, the same type of thermogenic energy transforms the food consumed into tissues and waste products. It is responsible for the complexion of the skin and the temperature of the body. This force is called Pitta, meaning "that which cooks or transforms things". Sweat, which is increased by heat, and blood, which is red in color, having properties common to fire, are the main seats of Pitta. Pitta also governs perception, which is the illuminating power of the mind.

The effects of the two energies of Vata and Pitta are inhibited by a third force, the agency of cold and cohesion, which in Nature functions as the rainfall. This force is responsible for growth and sustenance. Hence, it is named Kapha, meaning "that which gets activated by water". The plasma, watery secretions, muscular tissues, bony structures, and the nervous and reproductive systems are the chief sites of this dosha, which constitutes most of the substance of the body. It also imparts feeling to the mind, which is our ability to hold things on an emotional level.

Doshas, Tissues and Waste-materials

Ayurveda classifies all body constituents into three main categories:

1. doshas

2. tissues – dhatus
3. waste-materials - malas

The doshas are the energizing forces, the tissues (dhatus) provide substance, and the waste-materials are the excess that is eliminated.

Waste products (malas) are substances continually being removed from the body. Their physical appearance varies from gaseous, liquid, and semi-solid to solid form. The gross waste products are urine, feces and sweat. Subtle waste products are exudations eliminated from the linings of the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, and reproductive organs. The many minute waste products formed in the body during tissue formation are included among subtle waste-materials. Health is maintained when all waste products are properly eliminated. When they accumulate in excess, they damage the tissues and produce various diseases.

Tissues (dhatus) are bodily constituents that do not get eliminated from the body (with the exception of the reproductive tissue). They are maintained within the limit of the skin from the outside and the mucus membranes from the inside (of the gastrointestinal tract, lungs, bladder, joints, and cerebral linings). As bodily strength grows, these tissues continue to develop. They are seven in number, with characteristics and functions as follows:

The Seven Tissues or Dhatus

NAME	CHARACTER	FUNCTION
PLASMA - Rasa Dhatu	Circulating nutrient; fluid	Nutrition
BLOOD - Rakta Dhatu	Hemoglobin portion of blood	Oxygenation of the blood
MUSCLE - Mamsa Dhatu	Muscle Tissue	Movement
FAT - Meda Dhatu	Adipose tissue	Lubrication

The Seven Tissues or Dhatus

NAME	CHARACTER	FUNCTION
BONE - Asthi Dhatu	Supporting and accommodating bony structures	Support
NERVE AND MARROW - Majja Dhatu	Tissue within the bones: Nerve and bone marrow	To promote understanding
REPRODUCTIVE TISSUE - Shukra Dhatu	Reproductive secretions	Reproduction

The tissues provide support and strength to the body. The body cannot afford to eliminate them like the waste-materials. If they cross over the limit of the skin or the internal linings of the mucus membranes, the disease condition becomes serious because essential substances are lost.

The doshas play a dual role between waste-materials and tissues and have characteristics of both. The doshas do not continue developing like the tissues, nor are they completely eliminated from the body like the waste-materials. In normal amounts, they strengthen the body like the tissues, while in excess amounts they become toxins like un-eliminated waste-materials.

Vata dosha has no physical form, but is perceived by the various movements that it sets in motion or by the effects that it causes (like dryness). Pitta and Kapha both possess a fluid character. Pitta consists of lighter and warmer fluids, like bile and blood. Kapha comprises the heavier and cooler fluids, like mucus, fat and plasma that congeal into denser forms.

FORMATION OF THE DOSHAS

Formation of Vata

The action of swallowing enables us to take in food from the

external world. This movement is ongoing and depends upon previously digested food, which creates the need for more food to sustain the processes already set in motion by previous eating. This results in a continual process of eating, digesting and elimination. A direct relationship exists between energy and food absorption. The more energy that we require to function, the greater the need for the proper food to sustain it, for example, needing to eat more when we are doing hard physical work.

Vata dosha is described as the by-product of the digestion of food, which includes the energy produced by digestion as well as the waste gases of the digestive process. Anna Mala, the ejectable portion from food, equals Vata dosha or the portion of Vata that is produced. This absorbed energy is then utilized by the body for essential movements like breathing, heartbeat, digestion, and excretion of waste products, which are the main actions of Vata. These movements cannot be measured or weighed. Thus, Vata is perceived by the totality of its functions. However, if Vata is produced in excess it becomes a negative factor, drying or disturbing the various tissues and organs.

Formation of Pitta and Kapha

The secretions that appear in the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract disappear in its lower portion during the process of digestion. Saliva and mucus secretions (Kapha) and other digestive fluids, including various enzymes and acids (Pitta), occur in the mouth, stomach and small intestine. These are reabsorbed in the small and large intestines along with the digested food. In this way, Kapha and Pitta arise and disappear as part of the digestive process.

Kapha dosha is the ejectable product from the plasma or the nutrient body fluid or plasma (Rasa Dhatu) from which most bodily secretions arise. *Rasa Mala, the excess product of the plasma equals Kapha dosha*. Such Kapha loses certain characteristics of the plasma and aids in lubrication, tissue formation and elimination. When this Kapha leaves the circulating chan-

nels as a nutrient fluid, it forms various tissues according to the needs of the body. It may change into muscle tissue, or provide its lubricating material for adipose tissue, or help in the formation of bones, nerves, and reproductive fluids. The channeled nutrient fluid of Kapha aids in the cohesion of various tissues. Yet it can also undergo pathogenic changes, becoming mucus that clogs the chest or head.

Pitta dosha is the product of the breakdown of the blood (Rakta Dhatu). *Rakta Mala, the excess product of the blood equals Pitta dosha*. Pitta appears as colored secretions in the middle portion of the gastrointestinal tract and is responsible for the main digestive function. The blood is different from other tissues in that it does not combine with other constituents in the body. Pitta, however, which is a breakdown product of hemoglobin, is different from the blood in that it aids in various conversions; in the eye for vision, in the skin for complexion, and in the liver for formation of various tissues. Yet in excess, Pitta becomes a toxin that causes various sorts of inflammation or fever.

PROPERTIES OF THE DOSHAS

The doshas are known by their properties:

> *Vata dosha is dry, cool, rough, depleting, propulsive, subtle and astringent in taste.*

When the living body, which is basically watery in nature, comes into contact with such Vata qualities, it becomes weakened or depleted. However, even though these qualities can be harmful to existing tissues in the body, they are essential for certain body functions. For example, if the subtleness of a tissue is completely eliminated, movement in it is impaired leading to congestion and failure of essential bodily functions.

> *Pitta dosha is slightly oily in character, has a sharp odor, with secretory and vasodialating properties, and is penetrating, hot, pungent and sour in taste.*

In the process of digestion, Pitta becomes an easily flowing fluid. All colors except white, dusky or violet, denote Pitta,

which like fire, possesses color. Pitta strengthens the body by digesting food but can weaken it by creating excess heat that burns up the tissues or causes bleeding.

> *Kapha dosha is oily, cool, smooth, soft, heavy, nourishing, slimy, compact in arrangement, white in color, and sweet or salty by taste.*

Kapha is the substantial or material component of the three doshas and easily accumulates in various liquid and semi-solid forms. It shapes and sustains the body but in excess causes stagnation and build up of excess tissues, mucus, fat and water.

FUNCTIONS OF THE DOSHAS

Functions of Vata Dosha

As the principle of propulsion, Vata carries out diverse functions in the body and mind. It controls cell arrangement and division, the formation of different tissue layers, and the differentiation of organs and systems. It conducts impulses from the sense organs to the brain and from the brain to the motor organs. Vata controls the expulsion of feces, urine, sweat, menstrual fluid, semen, and the fetus. It regulates respiratory, cardiac and gastrointestinal movements, as well as all higher functions in the brain and spinal cord. Vata governs the movement of the mind and its transmission of information and provides the energy to perform all mental activities of thought and perception.

Functions of Pitta Dosha

Pitta is responsible for the formation of tissues, waste products, and energy from the food, water, and air that we take in from the outside world. It controls metabolic activities and governs all secretions that occur in the gastrointestinal tract and the enzymes and hormones that flow from ductless glands into the blood stream. Pitta regulates body temperature, hunger, thirst, fear, anxiety, anger, and sexual desire, which are all stimulated by heat. Psychologically, Pitta is responsible

for courage and will power, and assimilation of knowledge from the outside world (mental digestion).

Functions of Kapha Dosha

Kapha increases the deposits in the cell mass and is essential for the inter-linking of cells, tissues, and organs. It is responsible for the growth and sustenance of the body. Kapha prevents the destruction of tissues from wear and tear due to friction and movement by Vata, maintaining the flexibility, strength and immunity of the body. Capacities for reproduction, happiness, emotional calm, and the correct retention of knowledge depend upon the proper functioning of Kapha, which has a stabilizing and nurturing action on both body and mind.

The proper interrelationship of the three doshas is necessary for health. They are mutually interactive, increasing and decreasing in a proportional manner relative to each other. Generally, Vata and Kapha are opposite each other as light and heavy, function and substance, while Pitta mediates between the two as the power of converting one into the other. Although these forces are in a constant state of flux owing to the impact of internal and external factors, their equilibrium is usually maintained. When this equilibrium gets disturbed, the disease process starts. According to Ayurveda, all diseases are caused by disturbed doshas. Even traumatic diseases that are not initially the result of doshic imbalances soon become accompanied by them, usually first by aggravating Vata which is the most sensitive of the doshas.

SUBTYPES OF THE DOSHAS

Vata, Pitta and Kapha have five subtypes or five subdoshas each, according to their specialized functions.

Five Types of Vata Dosha

The five types or subdoshas of Vata, also called *Vayus*, are: *Prana, Udana, Vyana, Samana* and *Apana*. All these forms are responsible for various movements.

Prana – Udana

These two forms of Vata, having opposite movements, operate together. Prana Vayu moves from the outside to the inside. Prana is responsible for receiving air, water, food, and impressions from the outside world. Whenever a sound, touch, taste, or smell is attended with concentration, it has an effect on respiration (Prana). Prana Vayu moves downward from the head into the body. In the process, it brings in various external forms of nourishment and energy from food and breath to impressions.

Udana Vayu moves from the inside to the outside, mainly through exhalation and speech but also through various forms of exertion. Food and water received by the stomach, rendered fine during digestion, are eliminated to some degree through expiration. Speech, which occurs through exhaling air through the vocal cords, is due to Udana. Memory, which is the bringing out of the knowledge that has been previously received by Prana, is also a function of Udana. Thus, Prana is responsible for intake and Udana for output. Udana governs will, enthusiasm and motivation. Udana moves upward from the center of the body up to the head and is centered in the throat.

Vyana – Samana

These two types of Vata also have opposite movements. Vyana Vayu is responsible for propulsion from the center to the periphery of the body. The movement of the heart in pushing nutritive substances to the periphery is a function of Vyana. It governs circulation to the limbs and the flow of blood and sweat. Vyana carries efferent impulses from the sense organs to the brain. Vyana pervades the entire body from its center in the heart. Physical exercise and extension of the limbs occurs mainly through Vyana.

Samana Vayu, on the other hand, is the propulsive force from the periphery to the center. Afferent impulses in the nerves, bringing the fluid pushed out by Vyana back to the center and promoting the process of digestion, are functions of Samana. Thus, the action of Samana is the central pull action opposite the outward push of Vyana. We could say that Samana

is centripetal force, while Vyana is centrifugal force. Samana is centered in the navel and is responsible for the churning action in the intestines through which we digest our food.

Apana

In contrast to the above two pairs, Apana controls all downward discharges of urine, feces, flatus, menstrual fluid, semen, and the fetus. All these are controlled for a particular period of time before being discharged from the body. The overall control of these substances for a particular period is beneficial for building or maintaining the tissues. Since this control is beneficial to the other types of Vata, it is said that Apana controls all the different forms of Vata. Apana also sustains the immune function that rests upon proper elimination. Apana moves downward from the navel. It is often regarded as opposite Prana as eating is opposite elimination, or as opposite Udana (upward movement) as downward movement.

Five Types of Pitta Dosha

The five types or subdoshas of Pitta are: *Pachaka, Ranjaka, Alochaka, Sadhaka* and *Bhrajaka*. All these are responsible for some type of digestion, which process occurs on various levels throughout the body and mind.

Pachaka Pitta

Pachaka Pitta is responsible for the primary conversion process in the body, the digestion of food. It makes up the stomach acids, bile salts and other digestive juices. Because of its hot and penetrating quality, it disintegrates and digests food in the gastrointestinal tract.

Ranjaka Pitta

Ranjaka Pitta aids in the secondary digestion of food for the formation of tissues. The formation of blood (Rakta) and other tissues in the liver is the chief function of Ranjaka Pitta, which colors the blood and other secretions.

Alochaka Pitta

Alochaka Pitta is responsible for the assimilation and conver-

sion of visual stimuli that take place when an object is sensed by the eyes. Sensations of sound, touch, taste, and smell also require the proper digestion. The factor responsible for this digestion of impressions is Alochaka Pitta.

Sadhaka Pitta

Sadhaka Pitta is located in the brain and works through the nervous system. After sensing any object, its recognition is dependent upon a specific sequence of conversions in the brain cells governed by Sadhaka Pitta. The capacity to appreciate art is another function of it. Sadhaka Pitta works to digest ideas and experiences in the brain, particularly in the cerebrum.

Bhrajaka Pitta

Bhrajaka Pitta maintains the temperature and complexion of the skin, and helps in the absorption of sunlight, oils and ointments through the skin. Its condition is reflected by the lustre of the skin.

Five Types of Kapha Dosha

The five types or subdoshas of Kapha are: *Avalambaka, Kledaka, Bodhaka, Tarpaka* and *Sleshaka*. All these protect various organs from wear and tear due to the dryness of Vata and the hot and penetrating effects of Pitta. Similarly, they help maintain the cohesion and inter-linking of tissues.

Avalambaka Kapha

Avalambaka Kapha protects the lungs, heart, and upper portion of the intestines. Due to repeated contraction and relaxation of these organs, they are subject to friction and wear. But the fine, slimy and smooth secretions inside these organs protect them and preserve their integrity.

Kledaka Kapha

Kledaka Kapha protects the upper and middle abdomen from hot, irritant or cold food as well as from the secretions of Pachaka Pitta. It exists in the form of alkaline digestive secretions.

Bodhaka Kapha

Bodhaka Kapha protects the mouth from pungent, hot, cold or irritating food and drinks. It also helps us taste food properly. Potentially harmful substances are initially rejected by this taste screen. It also helps the other sense organs in the head that require their fluid lining for protection.

Sleshaka Kapha

Sleshaka Kapha lubricates all the bony ends of the joints and prevents their friction during movement of the limbs. It reduces wear and tear during physical movement. When it is reduced joint pain and arthritis occur.

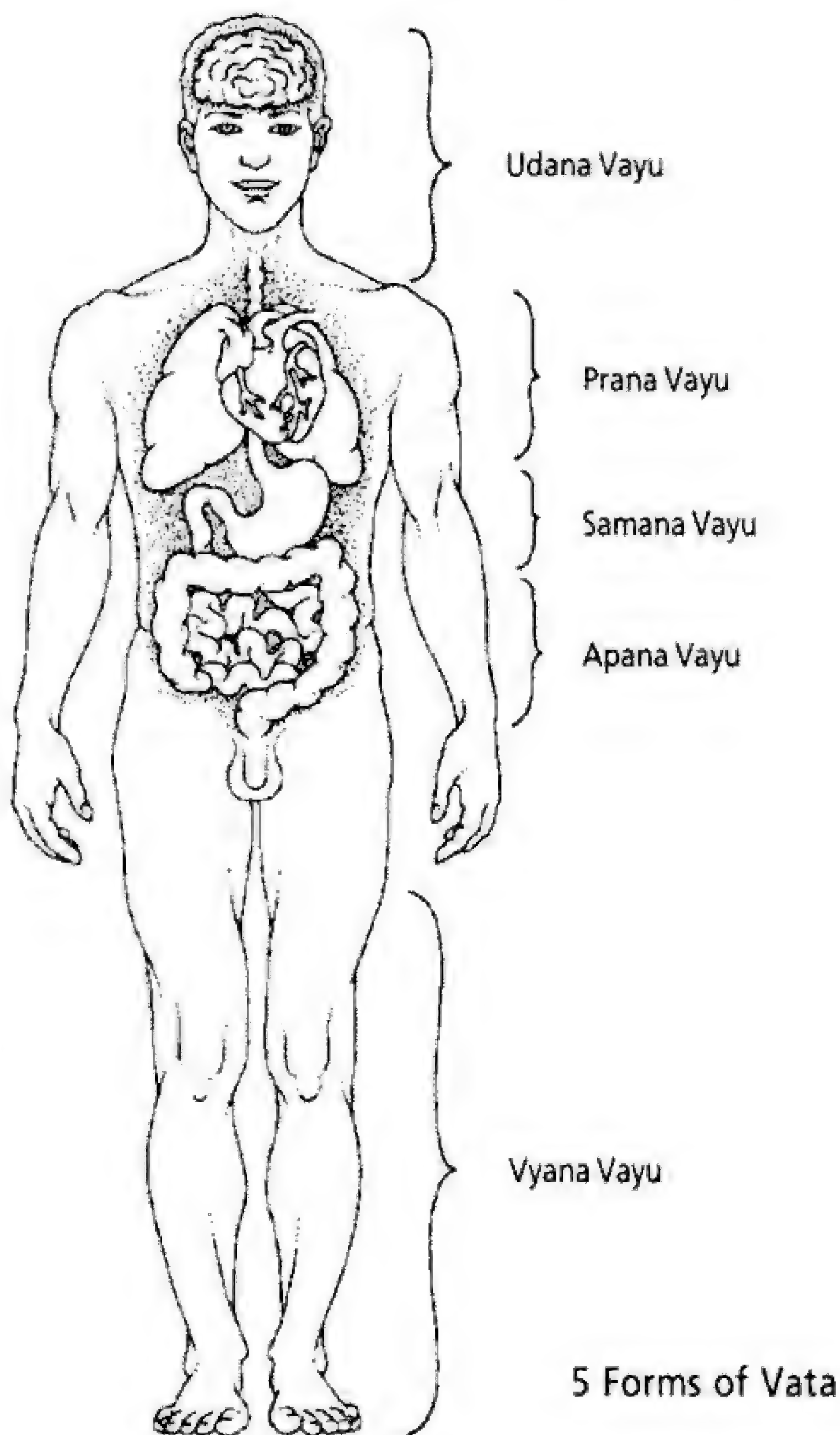
Tarpaka Kapha

Tarpaka Kapha provides various nutrients to the brain cells and gives lubrication and protection to the brain and spinal cord. It cushions the nerves from stress and harm. It allows us to feel emotional ease and contentment.

PRANA, TEJAS AND OJAS

Prana, Tejas and Ojas are the subtle or master forms of Vata, Pitta and Kapha that govern positive health and vitality. They are refined forms of the subdoshas of Prana Vayu, Sadhaka Pitta, and Tarpaka Kapha and have similar functions governing the mind, vitality and nervous system. Prana is the positive or health-giving aspect of Vata. Tejas is the positive or health-giving aspect of Pitta. Ojas is the positive or health-giving aspect of Kapha.

Ojas itself is the essence of all the tissues as the essence of the reproductive tissue. It holds our primal energy reserve and our congenital strength and sustains our immune function. Ojas, which is a very subtle oily substance, when heated creates Tejas which is the fire of courage, willpower and motivation. Tejas in turn generates energy or Prana, which here means the master Prana governing the functions not only of the body but also of the mind. This higher Prana is our creative force that allows for long-term healing and for rejuvenation, as well as for spiritual growth. Prana, Tejas and Ojas are part of a

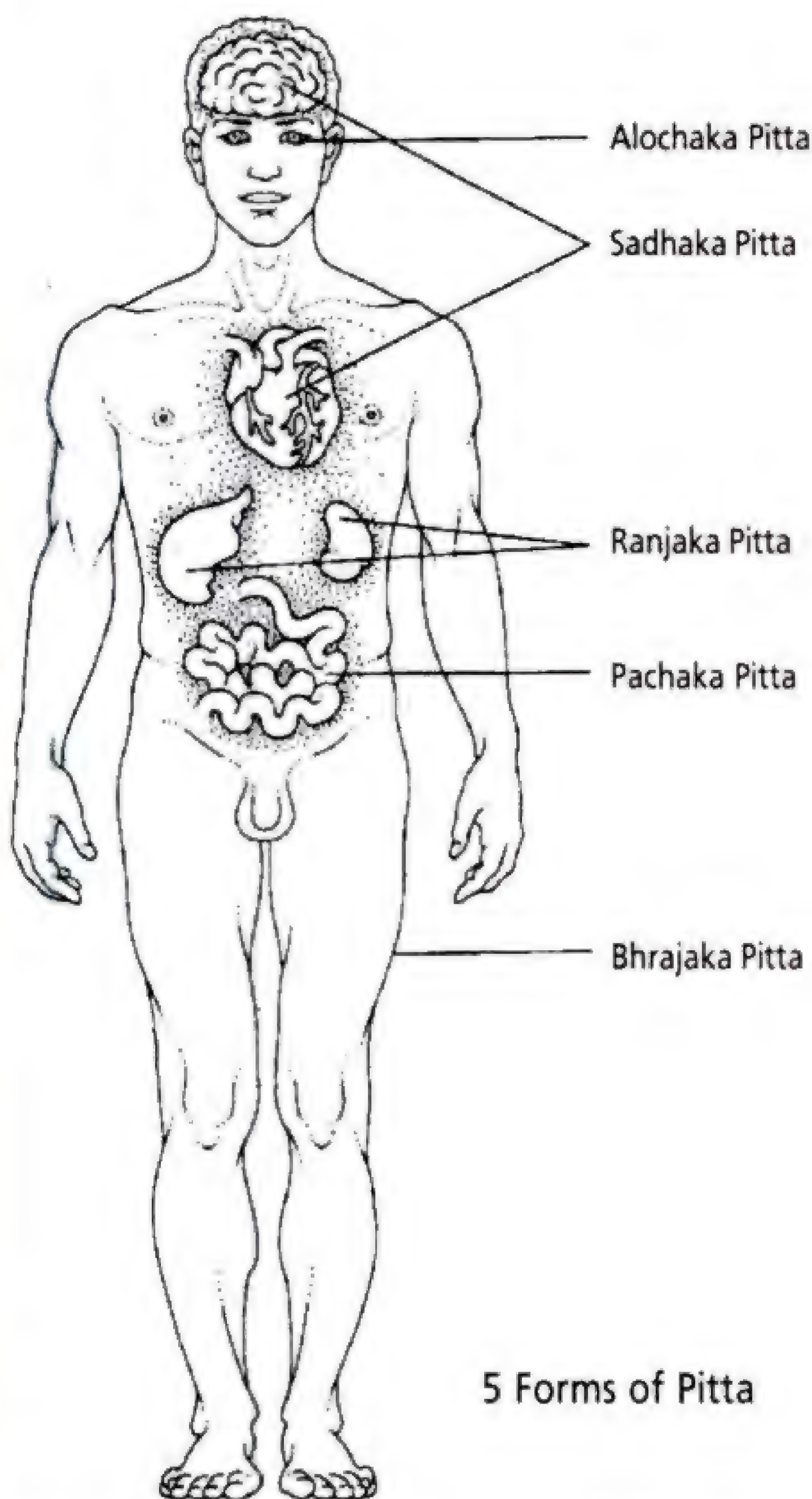


deeper level of healing that requires working with subtle energy.

DIGESTION OF FOOD

Agni - The Digestive Fire

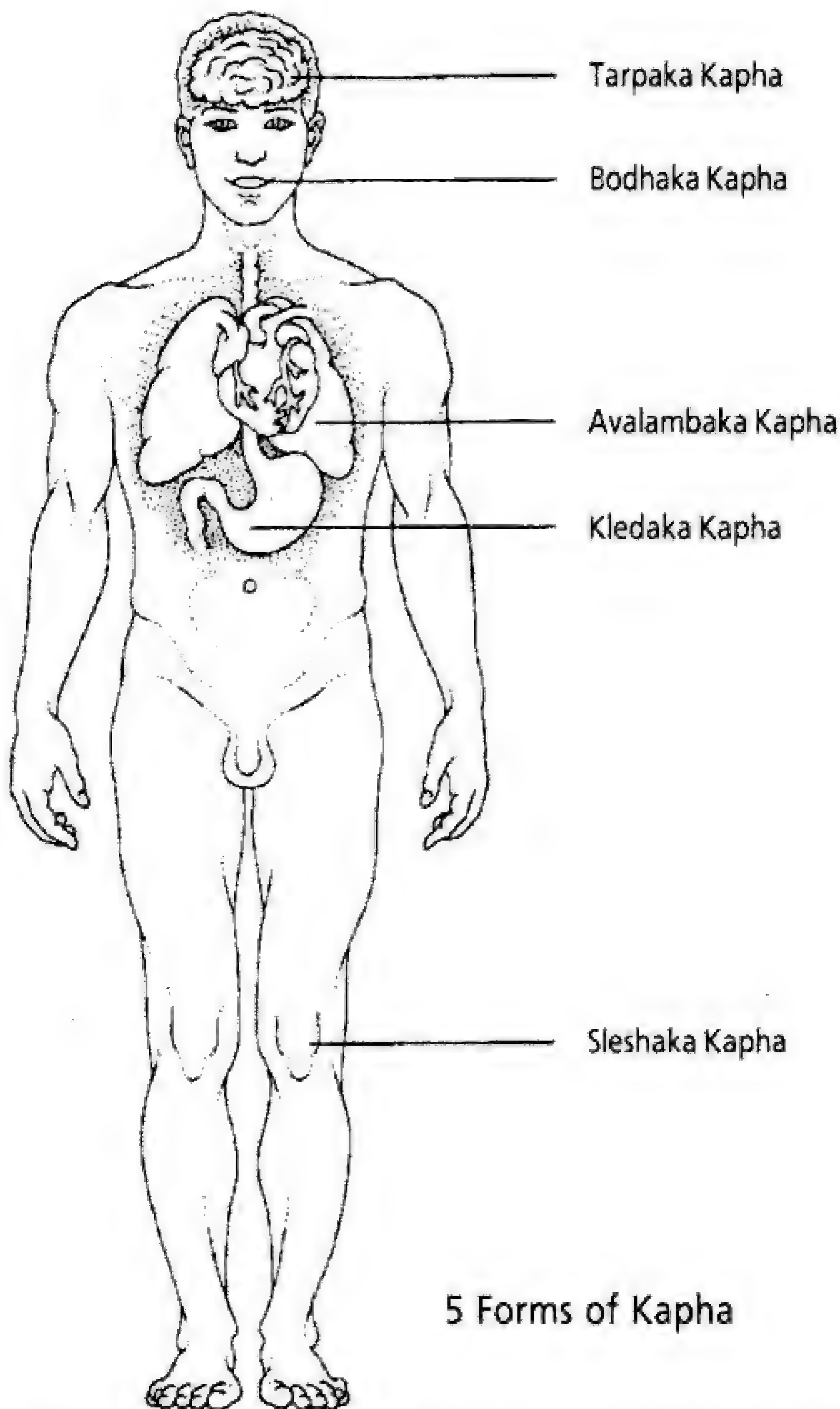
Agni refers to the universal principle of transformation in all its forms, which we most commonly experience in the outer



5 Forms of Pitta

world in the form of fire. Such a principle of conversion appears throughout the universe in the various changes of substances observed in biochemical, chemical and nuclear processes. It serves to transform the gross into the subtle, in which process energy is released and new forms are created.

Agni, the digestive fire, represents this power of transformation in the physical body. Agni serves to convert food into various bodily constituents. This conversion takes place by



5 Forms of Kapha

three types of Agni working at three different levels in the body, resulting in thirteen types of Agni:

1. Jatharagni; 2 – 8. Dhatvagnis; 9 – 13. Bhutagnis.

1. The Digestive Fire (Jatharagni)

The digestive fire is the agency responsible for digesting food in the small intestine. It is also called "Kayagni," or the bodily fire, because it is the main source of heat in the body. It sup-







3 *Individual Constitution: Prakriti*



1. AYURVEDIC (BIOLOGICAL OR DOSHIC) CONSTITUTION

Have you ever looked at yourself and then looked at the people around you and seen how much you resemble certain individuals but are very different from others? It is clear that there are tremendous variations among human beings both physically and psychologically and these must be considered for both health and happiness. Ayurvedic treatment is based upon understanding the individual constitution involved. It regards the condition of the living individual, the actual human being, as the most important factor in both health and disease.

Ayurveda does not regard disease as existing in itself but occurring as a complication of constitutional imbalances rooted in the nature and behavior of the individual. According to its view, disease is more a product of internal malfunctions than a result of external pathogens. The state of our internal energies determines our predisposition to external disease factors that are always present in the environment to some degree.

The predominance of the doshas at the time of conception decides the mind-body type of an individual, called *Prakriti* in Sanskrit. Once set, this proportion generally remains per-







good at maintaining public relations and bringing people together and like to care for others. They are generally successful in the long run and accumulate wealth and possessions for themselves and their family. However, they should not work in cold and damp environments, which causes their energy to stagnate. They are prone to become obese which results in joint diseases, diabetes or heart problems.

Physical Structure and the Five Elements

The predominance of the five elements in a person creates the physical structure and the relative proportion of the limbs and tissues. This is determined by those elements present at the time of conception and generally follows the predominant dosha. Kapha is watery in terms of elemental structure, Pitta is fiery, and Vata is airy. The description of these doshic types applies to their respective elemental types. Earth constitution is generally categorized under Kapha and ether constitution under Vata, but they also have their particular characteristics as described below.

EARTH CONSTITUTIONS have a body that is bulky, heavy, square and thick. Their bones are usually large and there may be a significant amount of body hair. They possess strong endurance and are good workers but can lack leadership skills, motivation or enthusiasm.

ETHER CONSTITUTIONS have lightness and looseness in the body, with clear senses and open external orifices. They have a lot of insight and sensitivity but can be impractical or ungrounded in what they do. While their minds are well developed, physically they can lack stamina and substance. They have good mental, artistic or spiritual inclinations.

2. MENTAL (GUNIC) CONSTITUTION

The predominance of sattva, rajas and tamas in the mind decides the mental nature and a person's level of spiritual development. This is based upon the gunas prevalent at birth, which reflects the karma or past life actions of the soul. As a mental







Doshic Constitution Chart

Physical Features	**Vata**	**Pitta**	**Kapha**
Body Frame	Lean & thin	Moderate	Large & thick
Body Weight	Low	Moderate	Overweight
Skin	Dry, rough, cool, black, brown	Soft, oily, warm, fair, yellowish, red	Thick, oily, cool, pale, white, glistening
Hair	Dry, rough, brittle, blackish, brown	Soft, oily, early gray, baldness, yellow, red	Thick, oily, wavy, dark, glistening, white
Teeth	Irregular, protruded, crooked, thin gums, tendency toward tooth decay	Regular, moderate, soft gums, yellowish	Regular, strong, white, healthy
Eyes	Small, dull, attractive, brown, black iris	Medium, sharp, penetrating, green, gray, yellowish iris	Big, blue iris, thick eyelashes
Joints	Bony markings seen	Just visible	Not seen
Musculature	Slight and stiff	Medium, flexible	Firm, stout
Appetite	Variable, scanty	Good, excessive	Low but steady
Thirst	Variable	Excessive	Less
Sweating	Variable	Excessive	Less
Sleep	Scanty, interrupted	Moderate, 4-6 hrs., slightly disturbed	More than 6 hrs. sound
Taste	Sweet, sour, salty	Sweet, bitter, astringent	Pungent, bitter, astringent
Elimination	Irregular, dry, hard, constipated	Regular, soft, oily, loose	Regular, oily
Physical Activity	Fast & very active	Medium	Lethargic & slow
Sexual Vitality	Lower, variable	Moderate	Good
Pulse	Thready & weak	Jumping	Broad & slow







MEAT AND FISH

(Note: Ayurveda recommends a vegetarian diet because of its sattvic properties but describes the qualities of animal foods for those who wish to take them.)

VATA	PITTA	KAPHA
Meat is good for strengthening: Beef, lamb, chicken or turkey, eggs, seafood	Take only cooling meats: Chicken or turkey (white meat), eggs (white), rabbit	Take only lean meats: Chicken or turkey (dark meat), eggs (not fried), rabbit

LIFESTYLE INSTRUCTIONS

VATA	PITTA	KAPHA
Don't overexert or stress yourself: Avoid fasting or skipping meals; avoid strong, frequent exercise, heavy work or much travel; protect yourself from wind and cold; avoid air-conditioning; reduce stress, worry, agitation and anxiety	Don't overheat yourself: Avoid using pickles, vinegar, chilies, ketchup, carbonated drinks and alcohol; do not work late at night; avoid jobs near furnaces, fire or smoke; protect yourself from sun, heat and bright lights; avoid conflict and argument	Remain active and alert: Avoid sleeping during day time; do not eat frozen or cold food, or much sweet or oily food; do not drink ice water or soft drinks; avoid sedentary jobs, damp environments, or exposure to molds; protect yourself from cold and dampness; reduce attachments







the skin, eyes, urine and feces. Psychological factors of anger, rage, hatred and jealousy increase. Many inflammatory and infectious diseases can occur or problems with the blood and the liver.

Management of Pitta

Anti-Pitta diet should be taken emphasizing sweet, bitter and astringent tastes. This includes dairy products like milk, butter and ghee, mung beans, basmati rice, wheat, sweet fruit, and cool spices like coriander, turmeric and cloves. Bathing or swimming in cool water should be done, followed by light massage with cool oils like coconut or sunflower oil. Sweet aromas can be used like rose or sandalwood, or rose water can be applied to the head and nose. Purgation can be carried out in serious conditions. When Pitta has caused tissue depletion, tonic herbs like shatavari or amalaki (Chyavanprash) should be resorted to.

KAPHA

Causes of High Kapha

Kapha is aggravated by dietary factors such as cold, oily and heavy foods like yogurt, cheese, butter, milk and meat, as well as by watery fruit and vegetables like cucumber, melons, oranges, and grapes. Sweet grains like wheat and rice, particularly wheat flour, also greatly increase Kapha. Cold and damp environments or work situations are additional factors, such as working on or near water. Psychological factors are greed and attachment and unwillingness to let go of the past.

Symptoms of High Kapha

High Kapha causes digestive disorders like loss of appetite, nausea and possible vomiting, along with heaviness in the stomach. There will be heaviness in the body as a whole along with pallor of the skin, cold hands and feet, and possible swollen joints. Mucus will increase along with cough, congestion and swollen glands. One will suffer from excessive sleep, lethargy, and lack of concentration. Mentally, one feels dull, emotionally heavy and depressed, and sensory acuity gets reduced.







tissues and waste-materials function normally, who has acuity of the senses and a happy state of being, is a truly healthy individual. If health is maintained from birth and the three doshas remain in a balanced state, then the person achieves a well-formed body, attractive appearance, good muscular strength, and peace of mind.

Good health can be maintained until death. For this, one should intelligently follow the rules of right living according to Ayurveda. Then a person can enjoy an optimum life span of a hundred years without contracting serious diseases. He will also gain recognition in society, lasting friendships, honor and wealth because he has the energy and ability to achieve all these goals of life.

According to the ancient Ayurvedic teacher, Sushruta, the ideal healthy person is an individual that has a balanced constitution. Those who have a balanced condition from birth are able to digest the correct amount of food and maintain proper elimination. Their systems and organs function normally and they have a happy state of mind. Vagbhatta advises four rules of conduct to achieve a healthy condition of body, mind and soul:

- Only use those enjoyable objects and circumstances that your mind and senses are agreeably accustomed to;
- Do all things only after repeatedly thinking about their appropriateness for your health;
- Maintain a habit of always critiquing your own actions intelligently;
- Always use things that balance your constitution, counter the effect of the season, and enable you to maintain physical well-being.

LONGEVITY

Vagbhatta and Charaka explain the visible physical signs of longevity at length. The skin of the individual is soft, smooth, firm, and fine. The forehead is prominent with the shape of a half-moon. The ears, when viewed from the front, appear







Features Indicating Good Longevity (cont'd)

Chest	Broad and full
Hands & Arms	Round, full and extended
Thighs	Tapering downward, round and plump

IMMUNITY

Immunity is the power of the body to prevent the development of a disease or to resist a disease that has already started. This definition applies to infectious as well as non-infectious diseases. All people do not have the same resistance to disease, as we can easily observe by how different people respond to contagious diseases.

Several bodily conditions reduce immunity. Persons who are too heavy, flaccid, or fat generally have weak immune systems. Conversely, those who are too lean or thin, whose blood, bones and muscles are not well developed, who take an unbalanced diet, or who are weak or nervous, have a lower power to resist disease. Individuals with opposite qualities – who have a normal body weight, good digestion, and emotional stability – are able to resist disease. Ayurveda believes that if the body is kept healthy and its strength maintained properly, there is little chance of falling ill even to very contagious diseases.

In Ayurveda, the strength of the body has two main aspects:

- Physical strength (Vyayamashakti)
- Resistance to disease (Vyadhikshamatva)

Good quality tissues - like plasma, blood, and reproductive tissue - sufficient Kapha and good Ojas (vital energy) maintain strength and the natural resistance of the body. These are similar to the factors that promote longevity, because achieving longevity depends upon a strong immune system. Resistance to disease is classified under three main types:







tion, itch and inflammation. Various commercial kajjals are sold in Indian markets and can be used in the same way.

For making collyrium, the best substance is the ash from a ghee lamp. To make this, a copper or silver bowl with a small amount of water in it is held over a ghee lamp. The black soot that accumulates under the bowl is collected as collyrium. Medicated ghee made with the Triphala formula is also good as an oil application to the eyes.

Care of the Nose

Medicated oil should be put into both nostrils every day (this is called Pratimarsha Nasya). A few drops can be put on the end of the little finger and gently applied into the nose or, alternatively, it can be applied with an eyedropper. For this purpose, the Ayurvedic oil called Anu Tail is best or, if it is not available, such oils as sesame oil, Brahmi oil, or ghee are good. Regular use of Nasya protects the eyes, nose, and throat against disease and improves their efficiency. It helps prevent diseases of the neck and head region and strengthens the voice. It counters allergies and sinus problems and improves the functions of the mind and senses. It is probably the most important of these daily Ayurvedic health aids.

Exercise

Everyone should perform regular light exercise. This helps the body grow and become proportionate in shape and increases muscular strength. The body then can withstand exertion, fatigue, heat, and cold. The appetite is improved and health is maintained. Exercise is most beneficial in the winter and spring seasons. It is best done to the extent of half the person's exercising capacity. When sweat appears on the forehead and armpits, and respiration becomes quick and one is forced to breathe by opening the mouth, these are the signs that exercise should be stopped.

While doing exercise, due consideration must be given to age, strength, physical condition, time, season of the year, and diet. If exercise is done without paying attention to these factors and becomes excessive, then it aggravates Vata and the























smell, taste and touch that is pleasing to the senses and conducive to health if taken according to the rules advocated by Ayurveda.

Best Food Articles by Type

Grains	Basmati rice
Legumes	Mung beans
Water	Rain water collected from high above ground level or spring water at a high altitude
Salts	Rock salt
Vegetables	Jivanti
Dairy Products	Ghee and milk from the cow
Oils Extracted from Seeds	Sesame oil
Animal Fats	Pig and chicken
Fruit	Grapes, raisins

Three Special Substances for Alleviating the Doshas

Sesame oil for Vata	Honey for Kapha	Ghee for Pitta

There are several other special substances:

- Amalaki is the best herb to preserve youth.
- Haritaki is the best herb for removing the doshas from the body.
- Milk strengthens life.

Properties of Food

All foods are composed of three factors:

- Five elements
- Six tastes
- Twenty attributes







quality, like wheat and natural calcium.

MOBILE (Chala) – Refers to unsteady or vibrating substances. These are useful in imparting motion in a certain direction. If the sufficient time for assimilation is not available and if the movements are increased, it may result in tissue loss. All oily substances are mobile but particularly laxatives like psyllium and castor oil.

GROSS (Sthula) – Soft and round substances like butter have a covering or enveloping effect. The natural arrangement of whole substances (Sthula) is more useful than the separated or fine form (Sukshma). This is because there is a natural arrangement of bulk in gross form which aids in nutrition as well as in the excretion of waste products. This quality belongs to earth and water.

SUBTLE (Sukshma) – Alcohol, honey, and oils spread quickly in the body because of this quality. Essential oils like wintergreen or camphor and spicy herbs abound in this quality. It occurs in fire and air and particularly in ether elements.

STICKY (Picchila) – Sticky substances like the gums of different plants have the property of adhering or forming a coating which is useful for tissue building and healing. Such are gum acacia, myrrh, guggul, honey, or a demulcent oil like peanut oil.

CLEAR (Vishada) – These are substances having the power to clean. Examples are soapnut tree, shikai and such saponin-containing herbs as yucca root.

Rules for Taking Food

Ayurveda stresses the proper regimen for eating. It is not just what we eat but how we eat that matters. Eating should be done with care and with consciousness as well as for enjoyment. All individuals, even while eating wholesome food, should observe the right rules of diet.

Food should be consumed in proper quantity while it is warm and moist and it should not be contradictory in quali-



























































































































































































































































































































































































AYURVEDA, NATURE'S MEDICINE

Ayurveda, the science of life, is the extraordinary natural healing tradition of India, going back over five thousand years. It is closely connected with the profound yoga and meditation paths of the region, emphasizing consciousness as the foundation of health and well-being. Ayurveda is a powerful system of mind-body medicine covering all aspects of physical, psychological and spiritual healing. It teaches us the language of nature so that we can take control of our own karma. It unlocks the secret healing powers of nature, transmitting the very wisdom of the life-force (prana).

Ayurveda, Nature's Medicine contains a full description of Ayurveda on all levels from diet and herbs to yoga and meditation, explaining both Ayurvedic diagnostic and treatment methods. It covers all the material found in two-year Ayurvedic programs in India for foreign students. Notably, it explains key Ayurvedic life-style recommendations for diet, exercise and sexuality, outlining daily and seasonal regimens for optimal health and vitality. The book is an important addition to any Ayurvedic library and is excellent reading for anyone interested in the eastern roots of mind body medicine. It is perhaps the best available textbook on Ayurveda for the serious student.

Dr. David Frawley, (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri) is one of the foremost western experts on Ayurveda. He is the author of numerous books, and teaches Ayurveda worldwide. He has also studied and taught extensively in India.

Dr. Subhash Randade, is one of the foremost eastern experts on Ayurveda. He is also the author of numerous books and teaches Ayurveda worldwide. He regularly visits Europe and America. These two experts bring together the best of East and West in explaining Ayurveda relative to current health and fitness needs.

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